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Now in its 10th year, Syrian war continues to impact world

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

CROWD CONTROL?



Ex-Army pilot links PFAs, death of daughter

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — After Jim Holmes' daughter was born in 2002, just months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks spawned a new American war in Afghanistan, the Army pilot worried about the impact a fatherless life would leave on her if he were killed on a faraway battlefield.

Holmes said he never imagined that 17 years later, it would be he who would mourn her loss. Kaela Holmes died in March 2020, just days after her 17th birthday, after fighting a 15-month battle with a rare brain cancer that her father now believes is related to drinking water contaminated by fire-fighting foam used for decades at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida, or near which his family lived for 16 years.

"Kaela was a beautiful, intelligent, loving daughter who loved her Army family with all her heart. She made a positive impact on everyone she ever encountered, excelled in school and never disappointed me once in her 17 years of life," Holmes said Wednesday during testimony before the House Appropriations Committee subpanel on military construction, veterans affairs and related agencies. "I lost my only child due to being poisoned by the same military that I faithfully served and fought for."

Holmes appeared before House lawmakers to advocate for a stronger Pentagon response to its decadeslong use of the firefighting foam across the U.S. and at overseas posts. The foam, called AFFF, contains perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances,



Holmes

Coronavirus screening causes massive bottlenecks at U.S. airports

By MALLIKA SEN
Associated Press

WEARY travelers returning to the U.S. amid coronavirus-related travel restrictions are being greeted by long lines and hours-long waits for required medical screenings at airports.

The dense crowds at 13 airports where travelers from Europe are being funneled — among the busiest across the country — formed even as public health officials called

for "social distancing" to stem the spread of the pandemic.

Austin Boschen was returning from a spring break trip to Jalisco, Mexico, with his girlfriend and described the situation at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport as "atrocious, no semblance of a line beyond the barriers and no officials or staff around to direct."

He and his girlfriend managed to get near the front of the crowd and learned people there already had been waiting for two hours, he wrote in an email; he reached

the head of the line 2½ hours later, and then waited another hour and a half to see an agent.

"The entire time people in the crowd would yell out in anger, and Customs officers would yell at people to not take pictures," he wrote. "Short chants among the room would start and stop periodically. It was very tense at times, the crowd was very agitated."

In the end, he and his girlfriend missed their original flight, and then missed a

SEE SCREENING ON PAGE 6

People crowd through customs at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport on Saturday. International travelers reported long lines at customs as staff took extra precautions to guard against the coronavirus, with some reporting waits of four hours or more.

AUSTIN BOSCHEN/AP

SEE LINKS ON PAGE 11

BUSINESS/WEATHER

US internet ready for work from home surge

By FRANK BAJAR
Associated Press

BOSTON — The U.S. internet won't get overloaded by traffic spikes from the millions of Americans now working from home to discourage the spread of the new coronavirus, experts say. But connections could also stumble if too many family members try to videoconference at the same time. Some may have to settle for audio, which is much less demanding of bandwidth.

The network's core is more than capable of handling the surge in demand because it has evolved to be able to easily handle bandwidth-greedy Netflix, YouTube and other streaming services. "The core of the network is massively over-provisioned," said Paul Vixie, CEO of Farsight Security and an internet pioneer who helped design its domain naming system. But if parents are videoconferencing for work at the same time college and high school students

are trying to beam into school, they could experience congestion. Figure a packet-dropping threshold of five or more users. That's because the so-called last mile is for most Americans provisioned for cable — download capacity is robust but upload limited. Fiber optic connections don't have the same issues and will do fine. Traffic has spiked 10% to 20% during peak hours since the start of February in greater Seattle, the U.S. region hardest-hit by COVID-19, according to Cloudflare.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (March 16)	\$1.1442	Switzerland (Franc)	0.9557
Dollar buys (March 16)	68.8740	Thailand (Baht)	31.82
British pound (March 16)	\$1.29	Turkey (Lira)	6.3346
Japanese yen (March 16)	101.00	(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
South Korean won (March 16)	1,193.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3775		
British pound	\$1.2305		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3927		
China (Yuan)	7.0082		
Denmark (Krone)	6.7518		
Egypt (Pound)	15.7004		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1.1069/0.9034		
Israel (Shekel)	3.6696		
Japan (Yen)	106.17		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3081		
Norway (Krone)	10.1245		
Poland (Zloty)	51.05		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.96		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.4159		
South Korea (Won)	1,213.16		

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	1.75
Discount rate	2.00
Federal funds market rate	1.09
3-month bill	0.26
30-year bond	1.56

WEATHER OUTLOOK

MONDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



MONDAY IN EUROPE



TUESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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MIDEAST

In 10th year, Syrian war still impacts world

BY ZEINA KARAM
Associated Press

BEIRUT — In a world gripped by a pandemic, global unrest and a fast-moving news cycle, it can be difficult to remember that the war in Syria is still happening.

Even before the coronavirus outbreak took over daily lives around the globe, the conflict, which began in early 2011, had largely fallen off the world's collective radars — reduced to a never-ending fight involving an ever-more complex web of players and refugees that few remember once lived in a country they called home.

But as it enters its 10th year, the war — which gave rise to Islamic State and triggered the worst humanitarian catastrophe of the 21st century — has shown it is still creating new tragedies that can have an outsized impact on global politics.

Earlier this month, Turkish and Syrian troops were clashing in Syria's northwest. That brought NATO-member Turkey and Russia, which back opposing sides of the war, to the brink of direct confrontation, and produced an unprecedented wave of displaced people. Arguing that it faces a potential new influx of refugees from Syria, Turkey announced it would no longer stop its vast migrant and refugee population from illegally entering Greece, touching off a new crisis for the European Union.

More than half of Syria's pre-war population of 23 million people have been driven from their homes, and a staggering 80% of the population live beneath the poverty line, according to the United Nations. Contrary to what some may hope, the Syrian war is nowhere near its end-game.

Chaos in the north

A cease-fire brokered by the Turkish and Russian presidents in Moscow last week may have



Syrian army soldiers fire their weapons during a battle with rebel fighters at the Ramouseh front line, east of Aleppo, Syria, on Dec. 5, 2016. With the world focused on the coronavirus outbreak, the Syrian war still rages on into its 10th year.

put the brakes on the Syrian government's devastating military campaign to retake the northwestern Idlib province. But the halt is not a long-term solution, and the war's final and most devastating chapter is yet to come.

In the three months before it was paused, the Syrian offensive triggered the largest single wave of displacement of the entire war. That may be dwarfed by the flight of humanity toward Turkey if Syrian President Bashar Assad resumes the assault to retake Idlib, home to some 3 million people. The area is the last remaining rebel-controlled area in Syria, and from Assad's perspective, the only place standing in the way of complete military victory.

"Even if Idlib is somehow retaken and an estimated 3 million people are accommodated in

Turkey or elsewhere, it is unlikely that Damascus has the capacity or even the tools to rule over formerly opposition-controlled areas for long periods of time without trouble," said Danny Makki, a London-based Syrian journalist.

'Perfect storm'

Nearly a decade of fighting has transformed the Mideast country into a failed state providing free-for-all proxy battlefield where world powers can settle their scores.

Russia, Iran, Turkey and the U.S. all have boots on the ground in Syria. The Lebanese Hezbollah group and a slew of other Iranian-backed militias are fighting there. Israel bombs inside Syria frequently and at will. The war has pulled in so many interna-

tional players that one Syrian joke says perhaps the Syrian people are the ones who need to leave the country, so as not to disturb those foreign powers fighting on their soil.

Assad, who has been able to keep his grip on the central government from Damascus throughout the war, continues to chip away at rebel-held territory with Russian help.

But many areas recovered by the government are a wasteland of wrecked buildings. Few refugees have dared to return, and reconstruction efforts are on hold, pending a political resolution.

Meanwhile, the economic situation is deteriorating so fast that ordinary Syrians struggle to keep up with prices that rise even over the course of a day. The currency is collapsing: it now takes 500

Syrian pounds to get a dollar, 20 times the pre-2011 amount. The economic squeeze has been worsened by neighboring Lebanon's acute financial crisis.

"It is a devastating dynamic, almost a perfect storm," David Beasley, head of the World Food Program, told The Associated Press in a recent interview.

Full circle?

Even if Assad were to recapture remaining rebel-controlled territory, ruling it is another issue. His government's policy of "reconciliation" in areas it already seized — effectively forced surrender of all opposition — has proven futile.

In Damascus, there has been a series of mysterious blasts targeting civilians and military personnel using explosive devices in the past three weeks.

In the southern province of Daraa, where the uprising against Assad began in March 2011, a reconciliation between the government and insurgents reached two years ago has crumbled with acts of violence reported almost on daily basis.

Ambushes, explosions and shootings left scores of fighters dead on both sides, and anti-government protests have re-erupted in some areas.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitoring group, said 217 people have been killed in violence in Daraa over the past months, including 45 civilians, 113 soldiers and pro-government gunmen, and 37 rebels who signed deals with the state in 2018.

"The growing insurgency in Daraa and the poor economic situation in Damascus is evidence that the war will not abruptly end, and in fact, the socio-political and military circumstances are present to indicate that this will rumble on for many years to come," Makki said.

Turkey-Russia patrols start amid protests on Syrian highway

BY ANDREW WILKS
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkish and Russian troops began joint patrols Sunday on a key highway in northwest Syria, Turkey's Defense Ministry said, while both the Russian government and Syrian opposition activists said the patrols were shortened because of protests.

Patrols on the highway known as the M4, which runs east-west through Idlib province, are part of a cease-fire agreement between Turkey and Russia signed earlier this month. The cease-fire ended an escalation in fighting that saw the Turkish military in rare direct conflict with Syrian government troops.

The vital highway, which runs through northern Syria from the

Mediterranean to the Iraqi border, has been partially closed since 2012. Work has been underway over the past days to refurbish it for traffic. Some sections of the M4 remain under rebel control.

For the past three days, residents of rebel-held parts of the highway have protested in rejection of Russian troops patrolling the road.

"The first Turkish-Russian united land patrol was carried out on the M4 highway in Idlib with the involvement of land and air elements," Turkey's Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Turkey and Russia carried out their first joint patrol mission along the M4 highway Sunday adding that "the patrol" route was "shortened" after militants

used women and children to block the way. The Defense Ministry's statement was carried by state-run news agency Tass.

Ankara has been given additional time to ensure the safety of troops taking part in joint patrols, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

Syrian opposition activists said residents blocked the highway with burning tires near the village of Nairab on the southern edge of Idlib in rejection to patrols by "Russian occupation forces."

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor with activists on the ground in Syria, said the joint patrols were not successful as they moved a short distance west of the government-held town of Saragbeh before being stopped by the protests.



TURKISH DEFENSE MINISTRY/AP

Turkish and Russian troops patrol on the M4 highway, which runs east-west through Idlib province, Syria, on Sunday.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Moves to and from S. Korea resume as exceptions granted

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Dozens of service members and loved ones arrived in South Korea, while others boarded a flight out over the weekend as the Army granted exceptions to an order allowing moves to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus.

About 70 troops and family members disembarked from a military charter plane that landed at Osan Air Base on Friday, days after many of them were kicked off the flight at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport amid confusion over the order.

Eighth Army commander Lt. Gen. Michael Bills authorized their movement to South Korea since they had been stuck in transit, not initiating movement.

"These soldiers and family members were, unfortunately, de-

layed at the Seattle Tacoma airport earlier this week," said Maj. Gen. Daniel Christian, deputy commander for sustainment. "It was an extra few days, but we're glad to have them on the peninsula and welcome them to the Eighth Army."

The passengers underwent health screening procedures that included a questionnaire and temperature checks for possible exposure to the virus as required for entry to all military installations in South Korea.

The military, meanwhile, began granting exceptions to the so-called stop-movement order, which caught many families in mid-move having already vacated homes, shipped household goods and sold cars.

The first group of service members and families left on the charter flight, known as the Patriot Express, from Osan Air Base on



KIM GAMEL/Stars and Stripes

American troops and family members arrive on Osan Air Base, South Korea, on Friday, days after they were kicked off a military charter flight in Seattle amid confusion over an Army order halting moves amid the coronavirus crisis.

Saturday.

Bills "approved a number of exception to policy movements to get soldiers and their families who had already cleared, shipped household goods, or who were otherwise adversely affected by the order, off the peninsula," according to the Eighth Army.

Exceptions were granted on a case-by-case basis, and the travelers will have to undergo quarantine and other requisite protocols upon arrival in the United States, officials said.

Maj. David Watkins and his wife, Irina, have to be out of their apartment by next week as they planned to transfer to Fort Belvoir, Va.

Watkins, who suffers from mental health issues and was recently diagnosed with a brain tumor, said he has been told his exception was approved, but he's waiting to see it in writing.

The order announced last week, which included Italy, halted moves to new assignments known as permanent changes of station,

or PCS, through May 6 as well as travel for professional military education unless the course lasts at least six months.

The Defense Department has since expanded international and domestic travel restrictions for all employees as the respiratory virus has spread rapidly, prompting President Donald Trump to declare the pandemic a national emergency.

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S. Korean virus numbers drop, but officials still cautious

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's daily coronavirus count dropped to double digits for the first time since the outbreak began nearly a month ago, officials said Sunday.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention logged 76 new cases Saturday, raising the total of positive tests to 8,162. The number of deaths blamed on COVID-19 rose to 75, while 834 patients have been discharged.

It was the first time the number fell below 100 since Feb. 21, when a woman in the southeastern city of Daegu tested positive and the virus spread rapidly through a

religious sect after she attended services.

Most of the infections have been in Daegu and surrounding areas, with more than 60% linked to the Shincheonji Church of Christ, which has apologized for its role in the crisis.

However, authorities have expressed concern over new clusters of infections elsewhere, including a call center in Seoul and the government complex in Sejong.

"We want to ask you to continue to maintain social distancing and refrain from visiting any crowded places and any social gatherings," Kwon Jun-wook, the vice head of the central disease control headquarters, said during a briefing.

The top U.S. commander in South Korea, meanwhile, said the number of military-affiliated infections remained steady at nine, and fewer people are being quarantined due to fears of the rapidly spreading virus.

"Currently, South Korean trends are trending downward and looking good," Gen. Robert Abrams said Friday during a video-teleconference with reporters at the Pentagon.

"We are not out of the woods yet here in Korea," he added. "We must all remain vigilant, and everyone must do their part in our efforts to control the virus."

Abrams, the commander of U.S. Forces Korea, said Friday

that 392 service members, family members and civilians were in self-quarantine at the peak of the crisis in late February.

"Today we sit at 55. That number fluctuates daily, but we've seen a downward trend for the last two weeks," he added.

Only one soldier has tested positive along with his wife; the others included three dependents and four South Korean employees.

USFK, which commands about 28,500 service members, has sharply restricted access to bases and banned troops from nonessential travel or outside social activities to prevent the spread of the virus.

That has led to a 60% reduction in the number of people entering installations, Abrams said, stressing that the number of confirmed infections comprises a tiny fraction of the 58,000-strong military community.

The South Korean military has said 38 service members have been infected and nearly 3,000 have been quarantined as a protective measure.

In all, 268,212 people have been tested, with about 90% receiving negative results, according to the KCDC.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.
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Sasebo first installation to ban escorted guests amid virus concerns

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

The base that is home to warships of the Navy's amphibious force in the Pacific has barred escorted guests — effective immediately — due to the coronavirus.

Sasebo Naval Base on the Japanese island of Kyushu made the announcement Friday afternoon, according to the installation's Facebook page. The order applies to all base facilities, including Naval Beach Unit 7's Yokose Landing Craft Air Cushion facility, fuel and ordnance facilities and off-base housing areas.

Government-issued ID cardholders, contractors and vendors will still be allowed access, the

post said. The restrictions will remain until further notice.

"In order to minimize the presence of non-mission related personnel on base and to ensure the welfare and safety of everyone in the base community, escorted guests will be prohibited on all [Sasebo Naval Base] facilities until further notice," the post said.

A spokesman for U.S. Forces Japan, Air Force Lt. Col. Robert Firman, said this is the first such restriction he is aware of in Japan. USFJ provides baseline policy and direction but local commanders are given the discretion to implement additional measures, he said in an emailed

statement Friday.

Similar restrictions have been implemented in South Korea, which has been designated a Travel Health Notice Level 3 country by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A CDC level 3 advisory means a widespread community transmission of the disease is occurring.

Japan is part of a level 2 CDC travel advisory, which means a sustained community spread of the disease is underway.

"Every installation's process and protective measures will vary depending on available resources and capability," Firman wrote. "As long as all standing policies are adhered to, com-

manders retain the authority and flexibility to address issues at their installations."

Firman added that USFJ continues to monitor the situation with a level of "seriousness and an abundance of caution."

"USFJ is tracking all new developments on a 24-hour basis in order to make the best decisions possible," he said. "Our goal is to provide maximum protection and safety to our service members, families, and civilians while also ensuring we remain operationally ready."

The Defense Department imposed travel restrictions for its uniformed and nonuniformed personnel Friday, banning all

forms of official travel for 60 days to countries affected by coronavirus, according to a memo dated Wednesday by Defense Secretary Mark Esper. The restrictions include China, Italy, Iran and South Korea, among others.

Travel for essential missions only is allowed to countries under a level 2 CDC advisory.

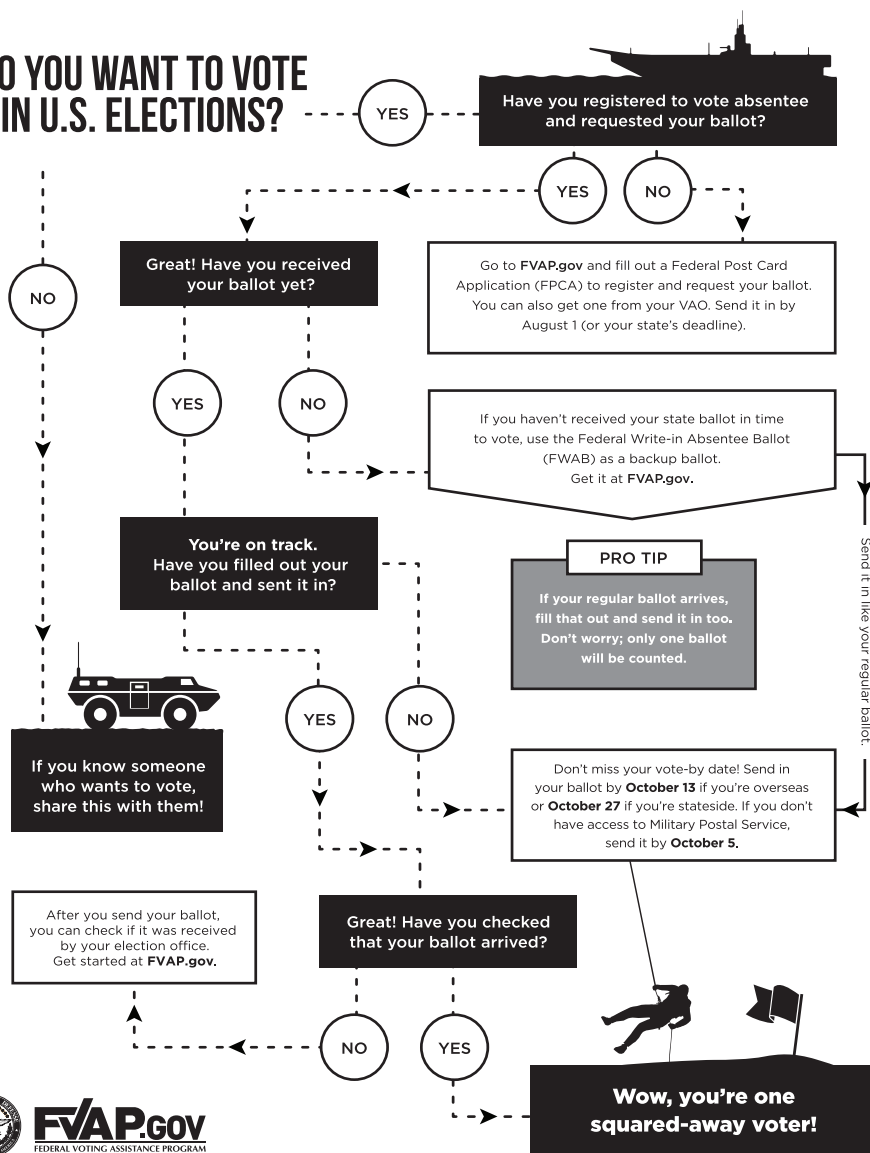
Sasebo is home to the operational detachment for the 7th Fleet's amphibious force, Expeditionary Strike Group 7, the Navy's only permanently deployed amphibious force, which is headquartered at White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa.

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So you're stationed overseas and it's an election year...

This handy flowchart on absentee voting lays it all out.

DO YOU WANT TO VOTE IN U.S. ELECTIONS?



FVAP.gov
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

VIRUS OUTBREAK

U.S. military in Europe steps up, locks down

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military in Europe stepped up its response to the deadly coronavirus last week as six new cases were diagnosed in defense communities in Germany and Italy, and the World Health Organization declared Europe the epicenter of the global pandemic.

Service members were banned from traveling to or from most European countries from the U.S. after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned that transmission of the virus was widespread on the Continent and raised Europe to Level 3 on its Travel Health Notices.

American bases in Italy locked down, along with the rest of the country, after Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte extended restrictions on movement and public gatherings from the north of the country, where Aviano Air Base and U.S. Army Garrison Italy are situated, across the entire nation of 60 million.

People were ordered to stay home, schools were shut, and most shops, bars, cafes and restaurants were closed under the drastic measure to fight the virus, which has hit only China harder than it has Italy. An official authorization form was required to go grocery shopping, walk the dog, seek medical care for health or medical reasons, or go to work if required.

On base, gyms and many eateries in food courts were shuttered. Off base, all retail businesses except grocery stores, pharmacies, banks and post offices shut down.

When Conte ordered the sweeping restrictions, 631 people in Italy had died of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, and more than 10,000 were infected. By Saturday, the death toll had nearly tripled to 1,809 and nearly 25,000 people had been infected by the virus since the first case in Italy was confirmed at the end of January in a pair of Chinese tourists.

On Sunday, USAG Italy an-

nounced that an Italian civilian who worked at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza had tested positive for the virus and was being treated in a local hospital. The employee last worked at the garrison on March 5, the garrison said in a statement. It was unclear when the Italian worker was diagnosed with COVID-19.

The first American service member in Europe to be diagnosed with COVID-19 was a sailor on base in Naples. He has been isolated at his home near the city's airport since his diagnosis on March 6.

Five people connected to U.S. military communities in Germany also tested positive for the virus last week. Among them were two service members — a soldier in Wiesbaden and a U.S. European Command officer in Stuttgart. The others were an American who works at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, a civilian employee at Ramstein Air Base, and a German who works for the Army in Bavaria. All are either staying at home or undergoing treatment in German hospitals.

"This is not an exhaustive list and includes other high-density locations," where it was impossible to stand at least 1 meter away from the next person — called social distancing — or where there was increased risk of close physical contact with others, said a temporary signed by Maj. Gen. Christopher O. Mohan. Mohan is commander of the Army's 21st Theater Sustainment Command and senior officer for Army installations in U.S. Army Garrison Rheinland-Pfalz.

There was little evidence Saturday of social distancing at a local supermarket in Kaiserslautern that's popular with Americans from nearby bases, even as much of Germany ratcheted up its coronavirus measures to include school closures and bans on large gatherings.

Although some shelves in the store had been stripped bare by shoppers, a sign at the checkout



MICHAEL DWYER/AP

A cleaning worker wheels his cart as people wait outside international arrivals at Logan International Airport in Boston, Friday. Beginning Friday most Europeans were banned from entering the United States for 30 days to try to slow down the spread of the coronavirus.

warned that no one would be allowed to purchase anything in quantities that were deemed by store management to be excessive for normal household use.

Germany had 3,795 positive lab tests for COVID-19 and eight deaths as of Saturday, according to the Robert Koch institute in Berlin.

Department of Defense Education Activity schools in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain will close for students starting Monday, DODEA spokesman Stephen Smith said. DODEA schools in Italy and Bahrain had already closed because of the virus.

Service members around Europe — and the globe — were placed on a 60-day stop movement order that applied to "permanent changes of station, temporary duty assignments, government-funded travel, personal leave and non-official travel, temporary duty, government funded travel,

personal leave, and other non-official travel," a message posted on Naval Air Station Sigonella's Facebook page said.

At Air Force bases in the U.K., which, with Ireland, was added Sunday to a list of countries whose citizens are barred from traveling to the U.S. because of the coronavirus, officials said "zero" airmen have shown signs of coronavirus infection.

In Norway, where the 501st Combat Support Wing has a base in Stavanger, 1,056 people had been diagnosed with COVID-19 as of Saturday, a steep rise from 227 positive cases at the start of last week, and two people have died. Prime Minister Erna Solberg has ordered schools and universities to close, and bars and restaurants that can't keep customers at least 1 meter apart to shut down. In addition, foreigners who aren't permanent residents of Norway are barred from visiting.

Sailors at Naval Station Rota

were urged to "remain calm" as Spain imposed restrictions around the country, where more than 100 people died of the virus between Friday and Saturday, and around 2,000 more people were diagnosed with COVID-19. The measures in Spain mirror those put in place in Italy.

"We will overcome this together if we remain calm, and (are) respectful of these measures, our neighbors, and each other," Rota officials said in a statement seen by Stars and Stripes.

The microscopic virus has also forced the cancellation of a U.S.-led cold weather exercise in Norway and caused the largest U.S. military exercise in Europe in a generation to be scaled back. Some 20,000 American troops were supposed to cross the Atlantic to take part in Defender Europe 20 but that number will be reduced because of the coronavirus outbreak, EUCOM said.

news@stripes.com

Screening: Travelers returning from abroad clog airports across U.S.

FROM FRONT PAGE

rebooked flight, finally managing to catch a third after racing across the airport.

"I'm less concerned about having to stand here for the amount of time that I am, and more concerned about where the people are traveling from that are around me and what they may or may not have been exposed to," another traveler, Dorothy Lowe, told WFAA-TV at Dallas/Fort Worth.

Posts on social media over the weekend indicated passengers at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport waited upward of four hours in winding lines, eliciting criticism from elected Illinois officials.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker tweeted at President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, noting that the customs process is under federal jurisdiction and demanding they take action to address the crowds. His concerns were echoed on Twitter by his fellow Democrats, Illinois Sens. Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth.

The Trump administration should have bolstered staffing at the receiving airports in anticipation of long lines, Pritzker said Sunday on ABC's "This Week," but instead passengers "were flooding into O'Hare Airport, they were stuck in a small area, hundreds and hundreds of people, and that's exactly what you don't want in this pandemic."

Sunday, he said, "its going to be even worse."

While U.S. citizens, green card holders and some others are allowed to return home, travelers from Europe are being funneled to the 13 airports where they are subject to health screenings and quarantine orders.

Acknowledging the long lines at those airports in tweets posted just after midnight, the Department of Homeland Security's acting secretary said the screenings take about a minute per passenger.

"Right now we are working to add additional screening capacity and working with the airlines to expedite the process," Chad Wolf tweeted. "I understand this is very stressful. In these unpre-

cedented times, we ask for your patience."

Packing travelers into narrow hallways and tight lines will elevate their risk of exposure. Some experts have questioned the effectiveness of travel restrictions because of the heavy volume of global travel.

Holes in the containment net may alarm the general public, but experts in controlling outbreaks expect some will slip through. The point is to slow down rates of infection to keep the number of severely sick patients from overwhelming hospitals.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, said on "Fox News Sunday" that the airport crowds could spread the disease, but that they

are likely to continue. American citizens, he said, need to understand that there is no need to rush back from Europe, but "when people see a travel ban, they immediately want to hunker and get home."

"Hopefully we don't have more of that, but I think we probably unfortunately will," he said.

The Texas airport's Twitter account responded to passengers who raised concerns about the cramped conditions, saying that its customer experience team was taking "extra precautions" and that hand sanitizer was available in all terminals. Meanwhile, O'Hare and Chicago police offered queuers bottled water and snacks, according to the airport's Twitter account.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Italian police assess US base compliance

By KENT HARRIS
Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — Carabinieri officers visited commissaries at Aviano and Vicenza last week to enforce a 1-meter “social distance” mandate between shoppers, one of the measures Italy has put in place to try to control the rapidly spreading coronavirus.

The unusual visit, which Aviano base leadership said was a reminder that Americans are expected to follow Italian guidelines to stem the spread of the virus, on base and off, came hours after Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte ordered bars, restaurants, beauty salons and most shops around the country to close as coronavirus deaths in Italy continued to rise.

The number of people in Italy who have tested positive for the virus, which can cause severe respiratory disease, jumped from more than 15,000 Thursday to 17,660

on Friday, data collected by the Italian health ministry show. Of those, 1,266 have died and 1,328 were in intensive care.

Only supermarkets, pharmacies, banks and post offices were exempted from the tougher restrictions, but they had to ensure that customers kept a safe distance away from each other to prevent the virus spreading further than it already had in Italy, which has the worst coronavirus outbreak outside of China.

Under the new rules, only one person per household can go to the shops that are open, and anyone who needs to leave their home — to go to work or even just to walk the dog — must obtain and carry an official authorization form, allowing them to be outside.

At Vicenza, the carabinieri officers visited the exchange and the post office, as well as the commissary.

Red tape has been placed on the floor at 1-meter intervals by cash registers in

the Aviano commissary and other places people line up, to give customers a visual reminder of the distance they’re supposed to leave between themselves and the next person in line.

Facilities that fail to follow the Italian regulations may be closed, Lt. Col. Matthew Lund, Aviano’s base staff judge advocate, warned at a town hall meeting after the lawmen’s unannounced visit Thursday.

“So I want to stress that,” he said. “One-meter social distance.”

Although most Italian retail outlets will be closed under the latest decree, base exchanges in Italy will be allowed to remain open because they sell pharmaceutical items, technology that could be used to aid work from home, and car care products.

Fifteen people were in quarantine and 44 people in home isolation at Aviano as of Friday after being exposed to others who might have the disease, said Lt. Col. Mark Dudley, commander of the 31st Aerospace

Medicine Squadron.

No base personnel have tested positive, he said.

Just 15 people within the Vicenza military community have been tested for the virus, Lt. Col. Joe Matthews said Friday at U.S. Army Garrison Italy’s latest virtual town hall. No one there has tested positive either.

Only one U.S. service member in Europe, a sailor in Naples, has tested positive for the virus. He is staying at his home near the city’s airport. An American civilian employee at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany tested positive for the virus Thursday, becoming the second confirmed coronavirus case among the Defense Department community in Europe.

Nancy Montgomery contributed to this story from Vicenza.
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Navy Exchange says lodges can be used as quarantine sites

By SETH ROBSON
AND CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy Exchange has declared war on the coronavirus, procuring tens of thousands of masks and containers of hand sanitizer and preparing on-base hotels to host those who may be infected, according to a Friday statement by Navy Exchange Service Command.

“The Navy Lodge Program is prepared for any of its 39 facilities worldwide to be used as an official isolation or quarantine site,” Naval Exchange Service Command CEO Robert Bianchi said in the statement.

The exchange set up a crisis team March 2 to deal with issues caused by the virus.

“Navy Lodge Regional Directors developed a list of precautions and reminders displayed at all locations,” he said. “All Navy Lodges are fully stocked with the necessary cleaning supplies and staff have received additional training on the sanitization of common surfaces and types of chemicals to use.”

Last week, the exchange acquired for its stores an additional

24,000 masks and more than 70,000 units of hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes, Bianchi added.

If there are impacts on shipping, the exchange will work with ocean carriers and Military Surface Development and Distribution Command to try to keep products flowing to stores, he said.

Bianchi said the exchange employs procurement teams in Europe and Japan to hunt for additional supplies in those areas.

“We are diligently pursuing all available avenues for the products you are in need of at this time,” he said.

When suppliers have products available the exchange is one of the first to get them, he added.

Petty Officer 1st Class Chatece Chappelle, a gas turbine systems technician at Yokosuka, said items such as hand sanitizer are available at base stores, although there are purchase limits.

“There was one point initially where they had a couple items sell out since everyone was purchasing [certain items] so rapidly,” she said.

Some exchanges impose purchase limits on certain products to meet increased demand, Bian-



CHRISTIAN LOPEZ/Stars and Stripes

Dozens of lodges on Navy bases worldwide are ready to be used as isolation or quarantine sites for those affected by the coronavirus, according to Navy Exchange Service Command.

chi said.

A number of stores have also instituted “social distancing” for customers in line.

At locations like Bahrain and at Naples and Sigonella in Italy, where base schools have closed, the Navy Exchange school lunch program can still provide food to commands and military families at a moment’s notice, Bianchi said.

The exchange is trying to find alternatives to base barber shops

and beauty salons that host nations ordered closed, which happened in Italy, he said.

The exchange is also working with installations to keep overseas food courts open and ensure that enough bandwidth is available to meet increased demand for Wi-Fi on bases, Bianchi said.

“We understand the use of Wi-Fi is very important to our patrons overseas who may be confined to their homes,” he said.

The exchange has shipped an

extra 850 common access card readers, Bianchi said. The devices allow employees to log in to some of the government’s systems from home.

The exchange is also replenishing stores that it operates on warships at sea through distribution centers in Djibouti, Dubai, Italy and Spain, he added.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK



BRIAN FERGUSON/Stars and Stripes

The Vogelweh Elementary School and all other Department of Defense Education Activity schools in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain will be closed starting Monday because of coronavirus concerns.

Most Europe military schools close over COVID-19 concerns

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

All but a handful of the Pentagon's 66 schools across Europe will be closed to students starting next week as a precaution to help curb the spread of the coronavirus, school and military leaders announced Friday.

Department of Defense Education Activity schools in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain will close Monday, DODEA spokesman Stephen Smith said.

Teachers and school administrators should report to the schools Tuesday and continue to work, officials said.

Closures in Italy and Bahrain had already closed over coronavirus concerns. Schools in Bahrain have been closed since Feb. 26, and digital learning plans specific to each grade and teacher have been put in place for students. On Saturday, officials extended the closure until March 24th, in line with Bahraini

schools.

Military schools in northern Italy, the epicenter of that country's outbreak, have also been closed since late February. Schools at Naples and Sigonella in the south closed this week.

DODEA schools in the United Kingdom will stay open for the moment, Smith said, and a decision was pending on whether the kindergarten through 12th grade school in the Turkish capital Ankara would close.

The closures affect more than 24,000 students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

No DODEA Europe students, teachers or other employees have tested positive for the virus, Smith said Friday.

The schools are implementing plans for "digital learning" and expect to implement them starting Thursday, DODEA Europe East District superintendent Steven Sanchez said in a note to parents Friday.

Online learning plans will dif-

fer for each school, depending on needs and capabilities, Sanchez said.

"The expectation is that there will be at least two online live contacts with the teacher and students per class per week," he said.

DODEA is continuing to closely monitor the coronavirus situation with military leaders, health officials and host nation partners, Smith said. No firm date has been set for the schools to reopen, he said.

The closures in Germany were announced hours after regional governments around Germany, including in areas with U.S. bases, said that they were shutting down schools as coronavirus infections continue to rise around the country.

Marcus Kloeckner, Kent Harris and Joshua Karsten contributed to this story.
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First coronavirus case confirmed in defense community in Kaiserslautern

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — A U.S. civilian employee of the U.S. military's largest hospital overseas has tested positive for the coronavirus, officials said Friday.

The employee is a technician in the oral and maxillofacial surgery department at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, which serves military and defense personnel and their families and retirees living and working in Europe.

LRMC is contacting patients who may have interacted with the employee to discuss precautionary steps to ensure their health and safety, hospital officials said

in a statement.

The employee was advised to get tested for the virus after experiencing flu-like symptoms and developing a fever, said Gino Matto, a spokesman for Regional Health Command Europe.

The employee tested positive Thursday and is currently in isolation at home.

"The safety of both our staff and patients is our top priority, and ensuring protective measures are in place to reduce the risk of virus spread is equally as important," U.S. Army Col. Michael Weber, LRMC commander, said in a statement. "The hospital is prepared to both receive and

care for our Joint Warfighters and their families who test positive for COVID-19."

The LRMC employee is the second confirmed case of the coronavirus linked to a member of the Defense Department community in Europe, and the first in the Kaiserslautern area. About 50,000 Americans live in the city and outlying villages.

A U.S. sailor stationed at Naval Support Activity Naples tested positive for the virus March 6, U.S. European Command said Sunday.

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Changes to ways military moves coming this spring

By IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — The military will roll out changes to the way service members and their families move this spring, including a new requirement that movers pass background checks and allowing more time to file claims for damaged household goods.

"The changes are focused on addressing the most common pain points we have heard from personnel and their families," said Transportation Command spokesman Dave Dunn. "We're also working to make sure all the information on move mail is up to date for customers as they prepare for their moves."

The changes will take effect May 15, the start of the busiest time for permanent changes of station.

One of the most significant changes is the requirement for movers to pass background checks before they are hired.

"Enforcing background checks on movers will bring a peace of mind in the chaos of moving," Sgt. Gloria Lepko, an engagements chief with the 2d Marine Division said. "Knowing that your belongings are safe in the hands of a background-checked mover can be a huge relief."

One of the men sentenced to jail last year for the violent attempted

burglary of the home of an American family in Landstuhl, Germany, had a long criminal record. He and his accomplices found out through a moving company worker that the American family had high-value goods in a safe in their home.

Many moving company workers in Germany are short-term hires. It's unclear if they submit to background checks.

Under the changes, there will also be more time to file a claim for goods damaged during a move.

Service members would receive alerts while their goods are in transit, including an estimated arrival date.

"The in-transit visibility for families PCSing will allow for better planning and control of the stress that moving inevitably creates," said Capt. Ryan Doehrmann, a Marine logistics officer working with the Marine Corps Recruiting Command.

The other changes include a requirement that movers give at least 24 hours' notice before delivery, compensate customers when plans or delivery is late, improved customer service and the option for customers to have damaged items repaired or be financially compensated, based on estimates of what the repairs would cost.

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Stuttgart closes brothels amid coronavirus fears

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Brothels in U.S. European Command's hometown of Stuttgart were among a slew of sites that city officials have ordered to close their doors to help in the fight against the coronavirus.

In fact, any form of prostitution was banned, and clubs, bars, movie theaters, museums and public baths were also ordered to temporarily shut down to help in the city's effort to contain the fast-spreading virus.

Prostitution is legal in Germany, and big cities like Stuttgart have had red light districts where brothels line the street.

More than 20,000 Americans with ties to the military live in the Stuttgart region.

For U.S. troops, the closure of the brothels — and ban on all other prostitution as well — shouldn't have a large impact on weekend plans, at least in principle.

Troops can face criminal

charges for the solicitation of prostitution, even in countries where it is legal.

That wasn't always the case. The Uniform Code of Military Justice was updated around 2005 to add an anti-prostitution charge. Many young service members in Germany lamented the decision at the time, saying it was harsh and noting that prostitution was legal in the country.

But in years since, the military has emphasized that while that may be the case, young women who work in prostitution are at great risk of being trafficked.

A EUCOM fact sheet from 2017 described a "zero tolerance" policy for trafficking in persons. "Ensure soldiers understand the link between prostitution and TIP, and that, although legal in some countries in the AOR (Area of Responsibility), prostitution is often coerced and can involve underage individuals," the fact sheet said.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK



AYA ICHIHASHI/Stars and Stripes

Help Oki volunteers Aubrie Owens, left, and Yoko Nesbitt prepare bento lunch boxes for needy Okinawans on Thursday.

Okinawa-based military group provides lunches to less fortunate children

By AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

URUMA CITY, Okinawa — Donations of bento boxes for local schoolchildren missing their daily lunch brightened an otherwise gloomy Thursday in Uruma City.

Since Prime Minister Shinzo Abe asked that schools across the country close during March to stem the spread of coronavirus, some children on the island prefecture are going without their only healthy meal of the day.

American and local volunteers stepped up to ease that need by collecting 126 Japanese box lunches, called bento, along with 10 cases of fruit drinks and 30 pounds of rice and distributing it at Grace Asia International Church.

"When I heard of the school closure, my immediate concern was those less fortunate children who rely on the free school lunch," said Chris Nesbitt, director of Help Oki, on Thursday. "For those kids, school lunch may be their only nutritious meal of the day."

The delivery Thursday was just the latest. Last week, Help Oki made and delivered more than 190 bento, 220 pounds of rice and 90 beverages to children and single parents in Uruma City, Nesbitt said.

Help Oki, a volunteer group of military personnel, their families and locals, has been helping the less fortunate on the island since 2014. Chris Nesbitt, a retired Marine sergeant and New Jersey native, and his wife, Yoko Nesbitt, are the founders.

When schools closed in early

March, Help Oki contacted the local food bank, government welfare offices and other nonprofit organizations, Chris Nesbitt said.

"It's my passion to help others, and I don't feel like it's work to me," he said. "If you do what you love, it's never work."

On Okinawa, the prefectural government reported three people tested positive for coronavirus of 196 people tested as of Thursday, according to its website.

A third of Okinawa's children, 29.9%, live in poverty, a rate twice Japan's national average, according to a study by the prefectural government and released in March 2019.

"This result is very concerning," Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki said at the time, citing the report.

According to the study, Okinawa's divorce rate is the highest in Japan since 1985; rates of teenage pregnancy are twice as high as the rest of the nation.

Aubrie Owens, a Marine spouse and a manager of Help Feed Oki — a sister organization to Help Oki — has been collecting food from the military community and donating it to the local food bank for over a year.

"Just last week, we donated over 1,130 pounds of food that was collected from the military community to the local food bank," Owens said.

Ivory Molina, a Marine spouse, volunteered with Help Oki since last October. Molina and her family love Okinawa and they are on the second tour here, she said.

"I want to make a difference for the community," she said.

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Tests in Japan available for those who show symptoms

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — With coronavirus on the minds of U.S. service members and their families in Japan, a sniffle or a cough may raise sudden concern.

Tests for the disease are available at military hospitals, but patients must show symptoms — fever, cough, shortness of breath — before they are given one, according to military doctors who posted informational videos online or spoke at base public meetings recently.

"We don't test everybody — we don't test you if you have no symptoms," preventive medicine physician Maj. Andrew Fisher said during a U.S. Forces Japan virtual townhall on coronavirus concerns March 2.

"This is a limited resource, so we test the people who it makes sense to test and there's specific criteria that governs who qualifies to get tested based on who's most at risk," said Fisher, who serves as the public health emergency officer at Yokota Air Base.

Military hospitals in Japan may administer the tests but must send the samples for analysis to local Japanese health agencies, to Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta or Naval Medical Center San Diego, Fisher said.

Results may be returned in three to seven days, said Capt. Drew Bigby, commander of Naval Hospital Yokosuka, in a video posted Thursday to U.S. Naval Forces Japan's Facebook page.

As of March 9, Defense Department laboratories had conducted 143 tests for the coronavirus, Joint Staff Surgeon and Air Force Brig. Gen. Paul Friedrichs told reporters in Washington on Tuesday. The tests are processed at 13 DOD clinical labs across the nation, according to a Tuesday Defense Department statement.

In his video, Bigby described the testing process. First, those who have flu-like symptoms should contact their hospital before arriving there, he said.

At the doctor's office, patients will report their medical history and undergo a physical exam before possibly undergoing testing for a streptococcus infection, the flu or the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, Bigby said.

"The test consists of two swabs — one for your mouth, one for your nose," he said in the video. Those who are tested for coronavirus will be isolated "from family or others and pets in a private bedroom with a private bathroom" until results are received, he said. The isolation can take place at home.

Medical personnel will contact the patient daily "to make sure that you are well, and if you're not,



AKIFUMI ISHIKAWA/Stars and Stripes

Students in central Tokyo wear face masks to guard against the coronavirus Thursday.

'This is a limited resource, so we test the people who it makes sense to test.'

Maj. Andrew Fisher
public health emergency officer at
Yokota Air Base

you will be asked to be brought in," he added.

Those who have had contact with the patient but do not show symptoms will be placed in quarantine at home while the patient awaits results and must stay away from those who have not been exposed, Bigby said in the video.

This time of year, seasonal allergy sufferers may confuse their symptoms with those of the coronavirus. In Tokyo, for example, Japanese cedar trees produce pollen from February to April, according to the Tokyo International Communication Committee.

However, seasonal allergies, or "hay fever," unlike influenza and coronavirus, do not produce a low-grade temperature or body aches, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Also, coronavirus sufferers are less likely to experience the nasal congestion associated with allergies. Among coronavirus patients studied in China, less than 5% reported nasal congestion, according to the World Health Organization.

Deciphering influenza from coronavirus is more difficult. During the townhall, Fisher said symptoms of the two can look very similar, but different viruses cause seasonal flu and the coronavirus now in global pandemic.

"They are both respiratory and you can protect yourself from them in the same way" with handwashing and social distancing, he said.

"With the seasonal flu we have the benefit of having a vac-

cine, we don't have a vaccine for COVID-19 yet, but even with the vaccine, influenza is a very serious illness," he added.

As of Thursday, 620 people in Japan had tested positive for the coronavirus, according to the WHO. Worldwide, 125,048 cases have been recorded, about two-thirds of them in China, where the outbreak was first reported in December.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK



KEVIN BELL/U.S. Army

Soldiers from the 19th Expeditionary Sustainment Command join South Korean troops in a disinfectant operation Friday after a coronavirus outbreak in Daegu.

US soldiers help clean city at center of S. Korea outbreak

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — American soldiers recently donned protective gear to help South Koreans disinfect a housing complex in Daegu in the first such joint operation since the coronavirus outbreak began in the southeastern city.

The 19th Expeditionary Sustainment Command and South

Korea's 2nd Operations Command, both headquartered in Daegu, spent just over an hour to clean the area on Friday, according to the 19th ESC's public affairs office.

Soldiers wore hooded jumpsuits, goggles, face masks and blue plastic booties as they sprayed the cleaning agent on the street outside the housing complex.

The South Korean army had

thoroughly disinfected the interior after the apartment building saw several people infected by the virus more than a week ago, but had not yet cleaned the outside.

Daegu and surrounding areas have suffered the majority of confirmed coronavirus cases in South Korea after a woman tested positive in mid-February and proved to be a carrier.

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Doctor says Trump tested negative for coronavirus

By AMER MADHANI
AND JILL COLVIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has tested negative for the new coronavirus, according to the president's personal physician.

The White House released the test results Saturday night after Trump told reporters hours earlier that he had taken the coronavirus test, following days of resisting being screened despite the fact that he had been in recent contact with three people who tested positive for the virus.

Trump told reporters at a White House briefing Saturday that he had his temperature taken and it was "totally normal," shortly before stepping into the room to discuss the government's efforts to halt the spread of the virus. The pandemic has now infected more than 2,200 people in the U.S. and caused at least 50 deaths.

The president had multiple direct and indirect contacts with people who have since tested positive for the virus, including three people he spent time with a week ago at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida.

The Brazilian Embassy in Washington said late Friday that the country's charge d'affaires, Nestor Foster, tested positive after sitting at Trump's dinner table. So, too, have a top aide to Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who took a photo with Trump

and attended a party with him, and another person who attended a campaign fundraiser with the president that Sunday, according to two Republican officials who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss private health matters.

Trump, after days of insisting that he was not exhibiting symptoms, relented after being pressed by reporters about his resistance to testing when multiple lawmakers and countless citizens across the country who have had the same degree of exposure have not only tried to get tested, but also chosen to try to avoid potentially infecting others.

On Saturday, the White House announced that it is now conducting temperature checks on anyone who is in close contact with Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, including reporters who attended a White House Briefing and anyone entering the Oval Office.

Pence also wrote a memo to White House staff Saturday reminding them to take precautions such as avoiding physical contact, washing hands frequently and staying home when sick.

"It's imperative each one of us do our part to take the proper precautions to keep ourselves and our colleagues safe," Pence wrote. "As an employee aboard the White House Complex, we have an additional duty to protect the health of our Executive Branch and those working with us."

DODEA schools in S. Korea will remain closed for another week

By DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

URUMA, Okinawa — Students at Defense Department schools in South Korea face another week at home due to concerns over the coronavirus outbreak, officials said Friday.

Schools at Osan Air Base, Camp Humphreys and U.S. Army Garrison Daegu will remain closed through this week, according to a memo sent Friday afternoon by Jeff Arrington, district superintendent for Department of Defense Education Activity-Korea, to parents, students and school employees.

After meeting with U.S. Forces Korea officials last week, "a decision was made to delay the start of school to safeguard the health of students," Arrington's memo stated.

Teachers, however, will remain at work, Arrington wrote, "to provide ongoing learning experiences for all students." Teachers in the Korea district have been providing online instruction since

the schools closed Feb. 26.

The decision to keep schools closed was made "thoughtfully and deliberately, after conducting an analysis of the mitigation measures developed with the USFK medical community and others to create a safe zone in schools and to slow the possible spread of the virus," the statement continued.

Arrington's memo cleared up messaging earlier that day. The Eighth Army had tweeted around noon that schools would stay closed; a tweet sent 20 minutes later from Daegu garrison stated that decision was "pending."

Arrington counseled patience and support "as we wait a bit longer to ensure we have all the mitigations in place. We understand and share everyone's concerns and desires about schools reopening."

DODEA schools in Japan have remained open. Japanese public schools, however, are closed in response to a plea from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

DODEA officials expect to announce Wednesday whether ac-



MARYAM TREECE/U.S. Army

A father and son walk hand-in-hand on the first day of school at Humphreys Central Elementary School in South Korea on Aug. 27, 2018.

tivities scheduled in April will proceed, namely the Far East Creative Expressions visual arts show and the Honor Music Festival, both in Japan, according to DODEA-Pacific chief of staff Todd

Schlitz.

Far East spring sports tournaments scheduled for May 22-24 at various sites remain a go "at this time," according to DODEA-Pacific athletics coordinator Tom

McKinney. No set date has been announced for when a final decision will be made.

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MILITARY

Transgender man yearns to join military

By DAVID CRARY
and KEITH SRAKOCIC
Associated Press

LISBON, Ohio — Nic Talbott keeps himself busy, working as a substitute teacher, studying for a master's degree, helping with chores at his grandmother's farm. He also finds time, almost daily, for rigorous workouts — to ensure he is in shape in case his dream job, serving in the U.S. military, becomes available.

For now, that door is closed to him by the Trump administration for one reason: He's transgender.

Talbott, 26, was elated in 2016 when the Pentagon — with a green light from then-President Barack Obama — announced that transgender people already serving in the military would be allowed to do so openly. President Donald Trump, six months after replacing Obama, announced with a tweet in July 2017 that he would reverse that policy and bar transgender individuals from serving in any capacity in the military.

Four lawsuits were filed in federal courts challenging Trump's policy, including one in which Talbott is a plaintiff. The suits are pending, but the Supreme Court last year ruled that the ban could go into effect while the litigation continued. The ban was formally implemented on April 12, 2019.

Some transgender people who hoped to enlist have moved on to other pursuits, but Talbott refuses



Nic Talbott, left, hands a birthday cake to his grandmother, Rhoda Dineen, on Friday, with his mother, Tracy Carlton, center, at his grandmother's home in Lisbon, Ohio. Talbott is a plaintiff in one of four lawsuits challenging a Trump administration policy barring transgender Americans from enlisting in the military.

to give up on a career aspiration that dates to his childhood. "At this point, I am not looking at other options," he said. "I know this is what I'm supposed to be doing, and I know there are thousands of other transgender people like me. We shouldn't have to settle for a Plan B."

Before the ban, Talbott was participating in an Army ROTC

program. He says he'd be open to serving in either the Army or the Air Force, ideally as a military police officer or in a military intelligence unit.

Talbott lives at his grandmother's hilltop farm in Lisbon, in an outbuilding near the main farmhouse. He flies a large American flag from his front porch's fence.

His family is close-knit. On Fri-

day he, his mother and his sister fed his grandmother, Rhonda Dineen, with cake and coffee ice cream on her 73rd birthday.

At one point, the discussion turned to Talbott's future. If somehow his wish came true, and he were deployed far away in the military a year from now, the family said they'd be at peace with his missing Dineen's next

birthday.

Attorney Jennifer Levi, who is handling Talbott's lawsuit on behalf of Boston-based GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders, says she and her legal allies are trying to gain access to any documents and other information on which the Trump administration based its decision to reinstate the ban.

Once that discovery process is complete, the four lawsuits could go to trial in federal district courts — perhaps as soon as this fall, Levi said.

"We recognize the challenges, knowing what the federal judiciary looks like these days," she said. "But we think our case is incredibly strong. I don't see anything the government has, other than a baseless attack on transgender people."

All four service chiefs told Congress in 2018 that they had seen no discipline, morale or readiness problems with transgender troops serving openly in the military.

Their testimony contrasted with a 2018 Pentagon report, endorsed by the White House, that said that transgender people "could impair unit readiness, undermine unit cohesion, as well as good order and discipline, by blurring the clear lines that demarcate male and female standards and policies where they exist; and lead to disproportionate costs."

Links: Former pilot says he was not warned of contaminated waters on base

FROM FRONT PAGE

known as PFAS. The man-made chemicals, which have been used since the 1950s in products ranging from nonstick cookware to water- and stain-repellent fabrics, have been linked to an increase in cancer risks, birth defects and other health problems, according to the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

On Wednesday, Holmes told lawmakers in his years at Patrick AFB he was never warned that water in the area had been contaminated with PFAS, even as the Air Force's own water sampling showed groundwater contained drastically more PFAS in the drinking water than the Environmental Protection Agency had determined is safe. Air Force officials, he testified, denied there was any problem when asked about contamination.

"We've been told is: 'There is no problem here,'" Holmes said. "The Air Force leadership and the [Defense Department] has completely failed every service member, dependent and civilian person living on and around Patrick Air Force Base."

After retiring from the military last year, Holmes told lawmakers he ditched all of his military accoutrements — the medals and ribbons and uniforms and everything else collected during 25 years of service in the Army and Air Force. He kept only his identification card naming him a retired service member, he testified.

Congress and the Pentagon have taken some steps toward cleaning up years of contamination and working toward eliminating the use of PFAS-laced firefighting



Scott Faber, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs for the Environmental Working Group, testifies on Wednesday. Retired Army helicopter pilot Jim Holmes, right.

foam. In 2016, the Pentagon banned the use of the foam except to fight real fires and it will eliminate the use of the problematic foams entirely by 2024, based on current law. It also has created a task force to study the issue, and identified some 400 current and former military sites where contamination does or is believed to exist. The Pentagon is working in some locations with municipalities to treat local water supplies where it has found high levels of PFAS. However, communities around Patrick AFB are not among the places receiving Pentagon support, local officials said

Wednesday.

The Pentagon said the price tag to tackle the issue — containing and cleaning up chemicals — will be at least \$3 billion, an increase in the estimated cost in September of about \$1 billion.

"I expect that cost will grow as we further investigation and design remedies to address groundwater," said Maureen Sullivan, the Pentagon's deputy assistant secretary of defense for environment.

But for some in Congress, the military's response is not enough.

"We have to do more," said Rep. John Carter, R-Texas. "You can't ask a guy or a gal to go to war, and then for them to come back and find out that their family has been poisoned."

Rep. John Rutherford, R-Fla., said a first step would be to halt immediately the use of the firefighting foam at issue, and instead use PFAS-free foam even to fight active fires.

"2024 is ridiculous," Rutherford said, who compared the PFAS contamination with "another Agent Orange barreling down on us."

Scott Faber, the senior vice president for the Washington-based Environmental Working Group, called on Congress to address other products commonly used in the military that contain PFAS, including food packaging, sunscreen and textiles. EWG is a nonprofit group that specializes in environmental research and advocacy.

Eliminating the use of those products alongside firefighting foam, he said, could help lower the levels of those chemicals in the bloodstreams of service members and

their families, who are "disproportionately affected by PFAS pollution."

"Many of the highest PFAS detections in the nation have so far been found at DOD installations," Faber said. "... Communities near military installations are also disproportionately affected by PFAS pollution."

Holmes told lawmakers that he was aware of at least 16 cases of rare brain and breast cancers among the about 12,000 residents of Satellite Beach, Fla., the community just south of Patrick AFB where he has lived since 2013. He said he blames the military and its use of PFAS for those cases, and his daughter's death.

The Florida Department of Health studied some of those cases last year but it was unable to confirm the potential of a "cancer cluster" around Patrick AFB linked to PFAS, the agency announced in May.

But Rutherford, whose district in Florida is farther north around Jacksonville, said the issue should be studied further.

For now, Holmes demanded the Pentagon provide water treatment to communities around Patrick Air Force Base and warn service members and their families of the potential drinking water contamination.

"I will have to live the rest of my life knowing that my decision to serve in the military and reside on an United States Air Force Base resulted in the death of my beautiful daughter," Holmes said. "Let that sink in for a minute. ... I pray that no other service member will ever have to unknowingly sacrifice the life of their child by serving their country."

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NATION

Biden wins NEA endorsement

By BILL BARROW
Associated Press

The nation's largest labor union has lined up behind Joe Biden's presidential campaign, with the National Education Association on Saturday endorsing the former vice president for the Democratic nomination over his last remaining primary rival Bernie Sanders.

The NEA's board of directors chose Biden following a recommendation from the organization's political action committee board, following months of surveying the organization's 3 million members and multiple presidential candidate forums held around the country.

NEA President Lily Eskelsen

Garcia, whose union tops 3 million members, called Biden a "tireless advocate for public education" and "the partner that students and educators need now in the White House."

The union's decision came with Biden on the cusp of stretching out an insurmountable delegate lead over Sanders. The two candidates meet Sunday for their first one-on-one debate, two days before four populous states — Arizona, Florida, Illinois and Ohio — hold primaries with a combined 577 delegates up for grabs.

In the four states that vote Tuesday, almost 760,000 voters live in households with at least one NEA member, according to the union. NEA officials said the union's PAC would immediately push digital advertising into the four states on Biden's behalf, while also communicating with NEA households.

Democratic presidential candidates in 2020 were mostly in-step with education unions, with Biden and the rest vowing to replace President Donald Trump's education secretary, Betsy DeVos, with someone who's had classroom experience, while vastly increasing federal spending on early childhood, primary and secondary education. Biden's proposals come with an estimated \$850 billion price tag over 10 years. Among other ideas, he calls for universal access to pre-kindergarten programs for 3- and 4-year olds; tripling Title I spending for schools with higher



Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden speaks about the coronavirus Thursday in Wilmington, Del.

concentration of students from low-income households; federal infrastructure spending for public school buildings; and covering the cost of schools' compliance with federal requirements for teaching students with disabilities. Biden also opposes taxpayer money being routed to for-profit charter school enterprises.

Trump says he has power to fire Fed chairman

By AAMER MADHANI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Saturday he had the power to fire or denote Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, adding new fuel to his long-running animus toward

the central bank's leader at a moment when the economy was at risk of edging into recession.

Trump told reporters that he wasn't considering firing Powell, but reiterated his frustration with the chairman. The comments were particularly striking because they came as the coronavirus pandemic shook the global economy.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average had its worst week since October 2008. In just a few weeks, U.S. stocks have lost all the gains made during 2019.

"I have the right to do that or

the right to remove him as chairman," Trump said Saturday at a news conference called to provide an update on the administration's response to the coronavirus outbreak. "He has, so far, made a lot of bad decisions, in my opinion."

No Fed chairman has ever been removed by a president. The law

creating the Fed says its officials and those of other independent agencies can be "removed for cause" by a president. While that issue has never arisen in regard to a Fed official, the courts ruled decades ago that "for cause" meant more than a policy disagreement.

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WORLD

Holy Week ceremonies to continue without public

By FRANCES D'EMILIO
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican's Holy Week ceremonies will go ahead but without public attendance as Italy tries to contain the coronavirus outbreak, the Holy See said Sunday.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Brunetti said in a statement that "as far as Holy Week liturgical celebrations are concerned, I can specify that all are confirmed."

But Brunetti added: "As things stand, under study are the ways they would be carried out and who would participate while respecting the security measures put in place to avoid spread of the coronavirus." He added that in any case, faithful will be able to follow the ceremonies on TV, radio and through online media.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on April 5, culminating on Easter Sunday a week later, with tradition calling for an outdoor Mass in St. Peter's Square on both Sundays. Tens of thousands of faithful usually turn out for the celebration.

Italy is under severe lockdown, with the public restricted from leaving their homes except to buy



Luca Bruno/AP

Selfies sent by parishioners are shown on the benches of the Robbiano church as Masses for the faithful have been suspended following Italy's coronavirus emergency, in Gussano, northern Italy, on Sunday.

food, go to work or a few other urgent reasons, and when outside must stay at least one meter (about three feet) away from each other. The disease for most people causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some, it can cause more severe illness.

It is not clear if the Italian

decree's restrictions will be extended well into April. But fear of spreading the virus could also jeopardize the traditional Way of the Cross procession on Good Friday on April 10 at the Colosseum, even without the public.

In any case, virus fears and travel restrictions by many coun-

tries toward Italy have made tourism virtually vanish.

With St. Peter's Square closed to the public, and one case of infection reported by the Vatican recently, Pope Francis on Sunday delivered his traditional weekly commentary and blessing from the Apostolic Library instead of

from a window overlooking the vast square.

Francis praised priests for "creativity" in tending to their flocks, especially in the region of Lombardy, northern Italy, where thousands are hospitalized or in quarantine. He said their efforts demonstrated there are "a thousand ways to be near" to the faithful, if not physically.

Some churches in Italy are being allowed to stay open for individual prayer, but all public Masses are forbidden during lockdown to discourage crowding.

Francis didn't cite the Rev. Giuseppe Corbari, pastor of San Robbiano church in the town of Gussano, six miles from Milan, but he well could have.

Corbari printed all the selfies he received from faithful and attached them to the church pews, offering a vivid reminder of the powerful sense of community among Catholics.

Francis did single out for praise the Milan archbishop, who last week went out the roof of the city's iconic Duomo, or cathedral, to pray alone before a statue of the Madonna.

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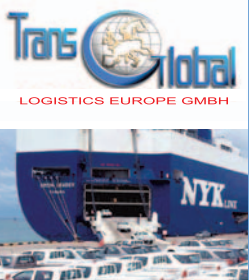
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OPINION

Does US need its bases in the Mideast?

By MIKE SWEENEY
Special to Stars and Stripes

Much has been said about ending wars in the Middle East, yet an actual shift in budgets and strategy has failed to materialize. Meanwhile, the expansive U.S. basing presence in the region remains a questionable testament to three decades of trying to manage stability and security in the Middle East through military means alone.

Thirty years ago, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait prompted a massive deployment of U.S. forces as part of a multinational effort to defend Saudi Arabia and ultimately liberate Kuwait. In the years since the first Gulf War, despite ebbs and flows in troop levels, U.S. forces never truly left the Middle East. Instead, America's footprint in the region — its basing presence — deepened.

"Recent tensions with Iran, sparked by 'maximum pressure,' have only resulted in new U.S. force deployments. After the killing of Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the Pentagon deployed 4,500 new troops to the region, mostly to Kuwait, bringing the total of U.S. forces in the region to more than 50,000.

As others have argued, an evaluation of U.S. basing in the Middle East is long overdue. Ideally, such an assessment should examine a broad array of options, including a complete withdrawal, conducted responsibly over a number of years. At a minimum, it is worth considering drawing back down to a modest posture similar to that maintained by the United States during the Cold War.

Today, the United States operates from more than a dozen major facilities in the Middle East, including the headquarters of the 5th Fleet at Manama, Bahrain, and air bases in countries such as Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Kuwait alone hosts five major bases in support of U.S. Army and Air Force deployments and is now home to more American personnel than any other foreign country in the world, save Germany, Japan and South Korea.

Yet, prior to the 1990 deployment, the United States spent the preceding 40 years

with only two long-standing bases in the region: the air base at Incirlik in Turkey — which was used primarily for NATO operations — and the naval base at Manama. The latter hosted only a handful of ships and wasn't even formally a U.S. outpost until 1971 when Britain ceded its position to America before formally leaving the region.

Despite that limited posture, America effectively pursued its twin strategic goals of countering Soviet influence in the region and ensuring a steady flow of energy to U.S. allies. It did so through a combination of measures — including economic assistance, military aid, covert action and diplomacy — but largely eschewed direct employment of military force.

To be sure, U.S. actions during the Cold War were not always successful and some had unwanted side effects that persist to this day — as seen most prominently in its poisoned relationship with Iran. But the point stands: For 40 years, while engaged in a global struggle against another superpower, the United States was able to achieve its strategic goals without a large footprint on the world without excessive reliance on military force and absent a large network of fixed bases.

That lesson — that instruments of national power other than military force can be the primary means of attaining vital objectives — is imperative as America contemplates its future in the Middle East. It also could be a useful guide in assessing how many bases the United States really needs. Such a discussion should legitimately ask whether the United States requires any such footprint in the region, at least over the long term.

Closing U.S. bases in the Middle East might seem like foreign policy blasphemy given the centrality of the region in geopolitical thought for almost 80 years — but the relevance of the region has diminished. Though it still remains an important source of energy, it is no longer as essential due to increased U.S. domestic production and Europe's (admittedly questionable) turn toward Russian energy sources. The Middle East accounts for just 4.2% of global GDP. The policy community in Washington has been slow to recognize this.

Ideally, force posture should derive from

strategy, but given the reluctance for a truly fulsome debate on U.S. goals in the Middle East, an examination of the basing network could suffice as a forcing function to better enunciate policy objectives in the region. A careful examination of the U.S. basing architecture in the Middle East could spur an overdue debate on U.S. regional aims and where they rank compared to contending military demands (in places like East Asia) and compelling domestic concerns (like ballooning national debt).

Any reduction in U.S. basing architecture needn't be undertaken precipitously. U.S. withdrawal from even a portion of its current bases will have ripple effects as profound as when we entered — the region will need time to adjust. But a 10-year horizon isn't unreasonable for dramatically decreasing the number of U.S. bases and perhaps eliminating them entirely.

Not only might this be prudent, but also it could be necessary if political and societal change in the Middle East accelerates.

Next year will mark 10 years since the protests of the Arab Spring. The grievances that inspired those protests were not even addressed by regional governments (with the possible exception of Tunisia). Most have chosen the path of cosmetic reforms mated with increased repression. The underlying problems remain, and it's reasonable to expect that at some point they will again surface, but more particularly if oil prices remain suppressed.

It's possible 2011 may turn out to be a tremor, one that presages a true seismic shift for the Middle East in the years ahead. The United States should consider whether it will continue to bear serious waiting time changes from offshore or, at the least, with a much-reduced regional footprint.

As the Cold War illustrates, large numbers of troops garrisoned at multiple fixed facilities are not needed to secure U.S. interests. In fact, the absence of such bases — and the entangling ties to host governments that they entail — could be critical to a more agile U.S. approach to the region, one that relies on other instruments of national power as the Middle East continues to evolve and change.

Mike Sweeney is a fellow at Defense Priorities. He is the author of "Considering the Zero Option: Cold War Lessons on U.S. Basing in the Middle East."

Horse racing needs immediate federal action

By BOB BAFFERT

Special to The Washington Post

The horse-racing world was stunned last week by the arrest of 27 people on federal horse-doping charges. The indictments describe a "widespread, corrupt" scheme to give racehorses performance-enhancing and other banned drugs that can mask pre-existing injuries and directly lead to horse injuries and death.

Nothing is more important than the health and safety of our equine and human athletes, and nothing impacts their health and safety more than the performance-enhancing substances concerning drugs. These indictments show that the current system of 38 state racing jurisdictions, each with its own regulatory body, laws and regulations, is entirely inadequate.

Horse racing is experiencing the most profound crisis in the long history of the sport. To ensure the sport's future, we must aggressively protect the horses who are the stars of the show; nothing else will restore the confidence of fans, gamblers and the general public. And that means federal action.

Our horses and jockeys deserve an unbiased, independent national antidoping authority. Fortunately, the Horseracing

Integrity Act is moving through Congress. This legislation would create the Horseracing Anti-Doping and Medication Control Authority, a private, nonprofit body with the expertise to set national drug policies, procedures and penalties. For the first time, we would be racing under a uniform, nationwide set of drug rules.

I hold out supporting the HIA until now because I've questioned whether the benefits of creating a new layer of federal regulation would outweigh the burdens. However, these indictments have convinced me that horse racing needs immediate and drastic action to fix a broken system.

Horse racing is more international than ever, so it's important that our national policies align with globally accepted international standards and rules. Fortunately, the HIA provides that the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency would play a key role in this national governing body. The USADA is universally recognized as having world-class drug testing, drug rule-making expertise, and it governs anti-doping programs for the U.S. Olympic team and others. The agency is independent, unbiased and would have no agenda other than the best interests of our athletes and our sport. Its oversight would ensure that we have the best possible rules, drug testing protocols and effective penalties. This in turn would en-

sure that horses would receive medications and doping body was necessary, and it would clearly outweigh any negative or health-threatening effects, and that the cheaters would be quickly caught and punished.

The HIA was introduced in the House by Rep. Paul Tonko, D-N.Y., and has strong bipartisan support, with 24 co-sponsors. Companion legislation was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and has 24 co-sponsors. The bill is moving, but Congress needs to speed up the pace.

In the past, there has been disagreement about whether a federally sponsored antidoping body was necessary, and I understand the reluctance of many in the industry to invite Washington onto the track. However, these indictments clearly show that a patchwork of 38 regulatory bodies doesn't work and that the losers are horses and all those who love this grand sport.

Companion legislation was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and has 24 co-sponsors. The bill is moving, but Congress needs to speed up the pace.

Bob Baffert trained Triple Crown winners American Pharoah and Justify. Horses he has trained since 1997 include Kentucky Derbies, seven Preakness Stakes, three Belmont Stakes, 15 Breeders' Cup races and three Dubai World Cups.

OPINION

Coronavirus attacks essence of campaigning

By JOE TRIPPI

Special to The Washington Post

As the coronavirus spread to over 40 states, and as the number of Americans infected increased, two campaigns for the Democratic presidential nomination were hopscoching across the country on airplanes carrying hundreds of people: the candidates, exhausted staffers and journalists covering the politicians' every move. These ensembles often traveled to multiple states on a single day, from one crowded event to another, in an effort to win delegates, who will then gather at a national convention in just a few months.

What could possibly go wrong?

It's hard to imagine a worse activity to undertake during a pandemic than a presidential campaign. Combating the virus demands social distancing, but a campaign demands social contact — constantly. The more of it, the better. That ethos is changing fast, however: On Tuesday night, both former Vice President Joe Biden and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders called off primary-night campaign rallies “out of concern for public health and safety,” as the Sanders camp put it. The Democratic Party moved its Sunday debate from Phoenix to Washington and planned to hold it without an audience, and both the Biden and Sanders camps have told staffers to work from home and ended door-to-door canvassing. After defiantly announcing a “Catholics for Trump” rally in Milwaukee, President Donald Trump’s campaign pulled the plug on it — and the president also canceled a trip to Nevada and Colorado.

If the virus continues its current trajectory, the candidates may find themselves conducting the first “no touch” campaign in American history — one in which baby-kissing is unthinkable, “virtual” rallies replace raucous crowds and the conventions become online TV events. Trump seems more likely to resist this path, out of either stubbornness or ignorance, but even if just the Democrats modify their behavior, it would be a remarkable spectacle that could even affect which candidate wins in November.

Sanders, Biden and Trump are all in their 70s, so people rightly wondered whether they were at risk of catching the virus on the campaign trail. On CNN’s “State of the Union” this month, Sanders — who, despite getting trounced in Tuesday’s primaries, says he will continue his campaign — suggested that he might have avoided crowds “in the best of all possible worlds, maybe.” Biden, at that point, he said he’d be running “as hard as we can.”

In fact, protecting the candidates is the relatively easy part. Presidential campaign staffers are quite adept at social distancing; they do it all the time when they want to keep their candidate from the press, for example. They can use similar methods at public events: Have their candidate enter through a side door, approach a podium from behind the stage, speak to a room full of 1,000 people (or an arena of 15,000), from a safe distance, and then leave to thundering applause without ever coming within a few feet of anyone.

It’s the crowds that are most at risk in this scenario, and not just from other audience members. The virus spreads to a tremendous number of people that a presidential campaign — whether during a primary race or a general election — puts in motion every time the candidate travels.

First there are the advance teams. Those crowds aren’t spontaneous, after all. An advance team that assembled a crowd and managed an event for a candidate in Seattle last week may be in Miami building the next crowd this week. Unlike the



candidates, advance teams don't have the option of not interacting with people. From scouting locations, working with local law enforcement to organizing volunteers working the event, it's just not possible to build a crowd without interacting with a lot of people.

Then there are the journalists who wander into the audience and ask all those questions (“Why are you for Bernie?” “Why Trump?”), then get back on the campaign plane to ask similar questions, in a new crowd, in a new city.

In retrospect, it seems almost insane: Before Tuesday’s primaries, the Democratic campaigns and the press were shutting down Missouri, Michigan and the state of Washington, which has seen the largest number of people testing positive for the coronavirus and the largest number of deaths in the United States. Then they were off to Arizona, Florida, Ohio and Illinois. It's not just the travel itself: It's the pace of it, the range, the close quarters on planes and in those rooms and arenas.

The recent cancellations are reassuring, and they suggest we're about to enter a new world of campaigning. In the past few election cycles, campaigns have made use of “tele-town halls,” in which thousands of supporters can call in to a conference number and hear the candidate speak live to them. Such virtual town halls could replace rallies; Biden has announced his fundraising events will be virtual, too, for now.

The loss of door-to-door campaigning could be one of the bigger setbacks that the virus deals to the campaigns. Over the last decade, campaigns have seen a resurgence in engaged supporters volunteering to knock on doors — and voters seem more receptive to appeals from neighbors and fellow citizens than they do to TV ads, which are increasingly viewed as propaganda. What's more, getting out the vote is the mainstay of every campaign's field organization. Volunteers go to polling places, check off the names of those who

have voted and then drive to the houses of those who haven't — even offering a ride to the polls. Volunteers can still call voters — from their own homes — but they won't be offering anyone a ride. (And the system breaks down if volunteers can't check those lists at polling sites.) If the crisis continues, the campaigns will have to reinvent field organizing and get-out-the-vote operations, though it's hard to envision how.

A “no-touch” campaign would inevitably be one that's more driven by expensive advertising. And satellite interviews with local TV news programs, already a staple of campaigns, will become even more important, possibly shifting the balance of power somewhat from cable news to local stations in key states.

Such a campaign will hurt some candidates more than others. Sanders' days as a candidate are likely numbered, but he has relied on crowd events to demonstrate the energy and passion his message generates; it's hard to imagine a substitute in a world where large assemblies are taboo. Which also raises the question of how Trump's campaign will respond, given that its signature has been large rallies. Can this man possibly conduct a reelection campaign sans adoring crowds wearing MAGA hats? He is likely to view the long-term abandonment of these events as an implicit admission that his handling of the crisis is not, as he likes to say, “perfect.” So might he — despite last week's display of caution — conclude he'd prefer to resume the kind of campaigning he enjoys so much?

He can try. But if the coronavirus continues to spread, and if public health officials urge Americans to avoid crowds, even White House propaganda may not be enough to prevent Republicans from grasping reality. Trump may face the prospect of his supporters staying home and watching on TV as he speaks to smaller and smaller crowds — a potentially humiliating spectacle.

Democrats and Republicans might also have to scrap their national conventions as

we know them. We've already seen several Republican elected officials who attended the Conservative Political Action Conference in late February choose to self-quarantine because of contact with an attendee who tested positive for the coronavirus. Some of those same officials also had contact with Trump before they isolated themselves. This worry and confusion arose from an event that's tiny relative to a party convention.

For years, both party conventions have been little more than partisan TV shows; the coronavirus could offer an opportunity finally to admit this fact. There is no reason to have delegates travel during a health crisis to be props in a party telethon. The parties can produce one night of live speeches and videos, and the next night air the nominee's acceptance speech and the unveiling (or, in the Republicans' case, the re-unveiling) of the vice-presidential nominee. For a while, it looked as if a brokered Democratic convention might be a possibility. That's not going to happen, so there's no need to plan secure ways for state delegations to caucus and vote on multiple ballots without being in the same large room.

With luck, the coronavirus will abate by Election Day in November. If not, there will be no easy way to handle the possibly hundreds of thousands of voters who could be ill or quarantined. As a contingency, state legislatures should change laws for absentee ballots, making them far easier to cast. The virus doesn't know red from blue, so this should be a bipartisan issue.

No one wants to see any of this occur. But the coronavirus is disrupting global supply chains, upending stock markets and spurring nations to effectively lock down their populations. It would be sheer hubris to think that, amid such chaos, the American presidential campaign is somehow immune.

Joe Trippi has worked for several Democratic presidential campaigns.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Doctors to train at new medical school building

NV LAS VEGAS — Las Vegas-area officials said a new medical building at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, will help train more doctors but more steps need to be taken to address a physician shortage.

Nevada has about 200 doctors for every 100,000 residents, which puts the state at 47th in the country.

At a joint meeting between the Las Vegas City Council and Clark County Commission, Las Vegas Director of Economic Development Bill Arent told officials that Nevada can't rely on just trying to recruit more doctors from other states.

UNLV's medical school, which opened in 2017, is helping to address that, and the creation of a new medical education building for the school is expected to expand the effort.

The medical education building for UNLV's three-year-old medical school is still being designed, and four years of construction is expected start in February 2021, according to interim UNLV medical school dean John Fildes.

Once the building opens, the school will be able to train more students, raising class sizes from 60 students to 90 or 120, said Maureen Schaefer, who leads the Nevada Health and Vital Science Asset Corp., a nonprofit that was created to oversee development of the building.

200 first responders battle mill building fires

RI PAWTUCKET — Mill buildings in Rhode Island went up in flames in spectacular fashion.

Video posted by a bystander showed huge, pulsing balls of flame consuming the vacant buildings.

Pawtucket Mayor Don Grebhen said that four buildings caught fire, but that no injuries were reported. WJAR-TV reported.

Nearby streets were blocked off as firefighters from nearby departments joined in on the response. The cause of the fire will be investigated by the state fire marshal.

The Salvation Army says members of its emergency disaster team supplied breakfast and hydration to approximately 200 first responders, who worked to combat the blaze.

Inmates transfer after concerns of poor care

VA CHESTERFIELD — Concerns about inadequate medical care at a regional jail in Virginia have prompted officials in one county to begin removing nearly 200 inmates.

Chesterfield County Sheriff Karl Leonard said he has received nearly daily phone calls, emails and text messages from family members of inmates who say their loved ones are receiving poor or negligent medical care at the Riverside Regional Jail.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported that Leonard recently told the Chesterfield Board of



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

Monumental run

The Washington Monument is visible behind Marines from Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, as they run past cherry trees, some of which have begun to bloom, along the Tidal Basin at East Potomac Park in Washington.

Supervisors that the next 96 inmates who are booked in the Chesterfield Jail will remain at the county facility instead of being transferred to Riverside, as they typically would be. He said another 100 Chesterfield inmates will be transferred to another regional jail in the state.

Riverside has been dogged by allegations of mismanagement. It is currently under state probation for three years following two inmate suicides in 2017 that state officials said were directly or indirectly caused by staff shortcomings and policy violations.

Riverside spokesman Lt. Charlene Jones declined to comment on Chesterfield's plans to remove inmates or on the allegations of inadequate medical care.

Judy Lilley, a spokeswoman for Wellpath, Riverside's medical provider, said in a statement the company could not comment on any specific patients due to state and federal privacy laws.

State hopes to raise minimum smoking age

FL TALLAHASSEE — Florida is poised to raise the minimum age for smoking and vaping to 21.

The state Senate joined the House in approving a measure that would also ban the sale of vaped nicotine products used in so-called electronic cigarettes. The legislation now heads to Gov. Ron DeSantis for consideration.

Health advocates said the mea-

sure is necessary to protect public health, particularly among young tobacco users.

While smoking among youth has been on the decline in recent years, vaping has surged. The rise has alarmed health advocates who worry about nicotine addiction and the stunting of brain development.

Vape shop operators have asserted that vaping is safer and helps wean smokers off cancer-causing cigarettes.

Man pleads guilty to stealing student loans

IL WHEATON — A man who pleaded guilty to stealing more than \$225,000 in student loans from the College of Du-

THE CENSUS

\$1M

The amount in federal grants that West Virginia will receive

from FEMA to remove debris in the wake of the 2016 Greenbrier County floods. The floods killed nearly two dozen people. West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice said the grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency will help with property improvements in the county. Justice owns the Greenbrier Resort, which was hit hard by the summer 2016 flooding. A professional golf tournament scheduled that year was also canceled. This additional award is a result of an increase in cost-sharing by FEMA. The grant funding is part of the Public Assistance Grant Program and is meant for debris removal, emergency protective measures and restoring public infrastructure.

Page was sentenced to six years in prison.

Judge Alex McGimpsey handed down the sentence to Cedric Ramsey, 43, of Roselle, the DuPage County state's attorney said.

Ramsey pleaded guilty in December to one count of theft over \$100,000. His co-defendant, Mary Allen, 40, pleaded guilty to one count of forgery and was sentenced to serve 30 days in county jail and pay \$9,000 in restitution.

An investigation found that Ramsey recruited friends who gave him information to apply for admission to the College of DuPage and get federal loans and grants. The recruits then withdrew from classes, received tuition refunds, and split the cash with Ramsey.

State's Attorney Robert Berlin said the scheme began to unravel when a woman said she had received a tuition bill but had never attended. Ramsey will be required to pay restitution of nearly \$217,000.

Diver hired to help farm fields with flooding

MI BAY CITY — A Michigan county hired a diver to keep farm fields from flooding amid rising water levels in Lake Huron and other Great Lakes.

Joseph Rivet, the Bay County drain commissioner, said this is the first time the county has hired someone to maintain their flap gates. Flap gates are check valves that prevent water in the Saginaw River from overflowing into ditches, WNNM-TV reported.

Rivet said high water makes it harder to remove blockage in the flap gates, resulting in flooded farmland.

"The bay water is going to be higher than the ground we're standing on. So being familiar and aware of that and trying to protect your property as best you can and your valuables is important," Rivet said.

Diver Don Middleton noted that checking the gates will keep him busy all spring.

From wire reports

FACES

Winona Ryder comes full circle

Celebrated '80s actress making peace with career, state of Minnesota

By NEAL JUSTIN
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Squarespace's Super Bowl commercial generated more buzz in Minnesota than Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes did on the football field thanks to Winona Ryder's whirlwind tour of the town she was named after.

But missing from that ad, as well as just about every story ever written about the star, is her much stronger connection to the state, a period in the mid-'90s she tried living low in Minneapolis, far from the harsh glare of the national spotlight.

Was the escape plan a success? "It was and it wasn't," said the 48-year-old actress during a recent promotional tour for her latest TV series, "The Plot Against America," an adaptation of the Philip Roth novel that imagines what would have happened if another famous Minnesotan, Charles Lindbergh, had become president. "I think back on it, I think about all the time I had to pretend I was fine and that I didn't really care, when actually I did. It's interesting. I can talk about it now."

To fully appreciate Ryder's state of mind during that period, you need to journey back 25 years ago, when Ryder was her generation's Jennifer Lawrence.

Zoe Kazan, who was 5 when "Beetle-juice" came out, channeled her real-life awe of Ryder in playing her kid sibling in "Plot."

"I think there's a quality of her whorship that happens between younger sisters and older sisters, no matter their personalities or age difference," said Kazan, whose credits include "The Big Sick." "That's very useful for me, considering how much I admire Winona."

Back in the early '90s, movies like "Heathers" and "Edward Scissorhands" were catnip to teens hungry for far edgier than John Hughes films. Alt rocker Matthew Sweet had written a creepy lust song in her honor ("Could you be my little movie



TNS

Winona Ryder visited Minnesota for a 2020 Super Bowl commercial. Watch the extended version at tinyurl.com/ugrlrhx.

star? / Could you be my long lost girl?"). Boyfriend Johnny Depp was sporting a "Winona Forever" tattoo on his right arm.

"Backlash was inevitable. "People in Hollywood can be a bit bitchy or mean," said Ryder. "The minute you're successful, you're a sellout. I watched it happen with music and it happens in indie film, too."

Ryder's escape to the Twin Cities had little to do with a desire to be close to the city she was born in — she only spent six months in Winona before her family relocated to California — and everything to do with a different sort of longing.

The actress, fresh off her relationship with Depp, had met Soul Asylum's Dave Pirner at a 1993 taping of "MTV Unplugged." By the end of the year, Ryder had played a political assassin in the band's video for "Without a Trace" and decided to move into the red-hot rocker's home in Minneapolis.

Soul Asylum, which had been an underground band since forming in the early '80s, had an unexpected hit in 1992 with "Runaway Train." That mainstream success, along with the lead singer's high-profile romance, set the couple up for scrutiny.

Rolling Stone referred to Pirner as Ryder's "boy toy." A 1995 album review of "Let Your Dim Light Shine" referenced a "chorus of charges that being Winona Ryder's beau has mellowed Dave Pirner and robbed him of his creative juice."

Local press was no less hurtful.

After Ryder moved away, she continued to make movies for the next two decades. They were mostly secondary roles, cameoing as Spock's mother in "Star Trek," rolling her eyes at Adam Sandler in "Mr. Deeds," locking lips with Jennifer Aniston on an episode of "Friends."

But about five years ago, Ryder let it be known that she was ready to get back to meatier work — and open to doing television.

David Simon, best known for creating "The Wire," jumped at the opportunity, casting her in a small but colorful role of a city council member in his 2015 miniseries, "Show Me a Hero."

"Stranger Things," which came out a year after Simon lured Ryder to the small screen, is the series that reintroduced Ryder as a pop culture icon. "Plot" is poised to become the project that does the same to her stature as an actress.

In the six-part series, she plays a lonely Jewish-American woman in Newark, N.J., whose infatuation with John Turturro's Lindbergh-jovian rabbi blinds her from the fallout of the new president's decision not to enter World War II and to establish diplomatic ties with Adolf Hitler.

Ryder seems completely at ease with the move to TV as well as her current feelings about

Winona Ryder attends the Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles on Jan. 19.

WALLY SKALLI,
LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS



Lin-Manuel Miranda shares unreleased track from 'Hamilton'

"Hamilton" at the Hollywood Pantages Theatre in Los Angeles and all performances on Broadway have been postponed, but now, without compromising recommended social-distancing procedures, fans can listen to a song that was cut from the hit musical.

Amid the rapidly escalating developments around the coronavirus March 12, "Hamilton" scribe and star Lin-Manuel Miranda took to Twitter to say he wished he could send everyone peace of mind via the platform. But since he couldn't, he sent the next best thing: an unreleased "Hamilton" song.

"Here's a cut Hamilton/Washington tune called 'I Have This Friend,'" Miranda tweeted. "No one's heard it, not even (Hamilton) director Thomas Kail."

In the song, which is available on Soundcloud, Alexander Hamilton asks George Washington for advice for his "friend" who is "in a bit of a bind." Miranda sings both parts.

Hamilton is referring to the



TNS

Lin-Manuel Miranda, left, is the creator, composer and original title character of "Hamilton."

situation he has found himself in regarding his extramarital affair with the married Maria Reynolds. After finding out about the affair, Reynolds' husband demanded payment from Hamilton to keep it a secret.

The song would have come before "The Reynolds Pamphlet" in Act 2 of the musical and was written before he penned the song "Hurricane," Miranda explained.

From The Los Angeles Times

Canceled SXSW tries to help films

By MARK OLSEN
Los Angeles Times

When the South By Southwest Film Festival was canceled one week before it was set to begin, it left filmmakers scrambling. The big question for so many — What happens next?

On March 13, the day the event was originally intended to start, the festival announced that it will move ahead with its juried awards. With 10 films each in the lineups for the narrative and documentary feature awards, as well as short film prizes and a handful of special awards, the winners will be announced March 24.

In a statement, South By Southwest director of film Janet Pierson made her first public comments since the cancellation of this year's festival. In it, she said that after the event was canceled by the city of Austin, Texas, "The SXSW Film Fest immediately buckered down to figure out what could we do to help and support the filmmakers whose work we love so much, and who put their trust and faith in SXSW for their launch. Many of them have spent years on the work they were bringing to SXSW."

"This was going to a transformative event, and with the cancellation, the filmmakers were left stranded and scrambling," Pierson's statement continued. Regarding giving out the awards without the public festival, she said, "We know it's no substitute for the live SXSW event with its unique

and fantastic audience, but at least it's some way to get attention for these wonderful films."

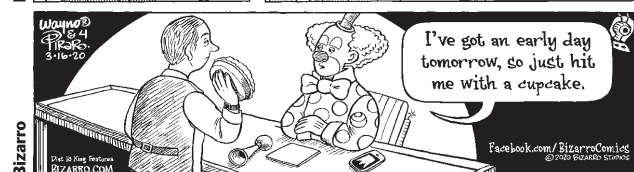
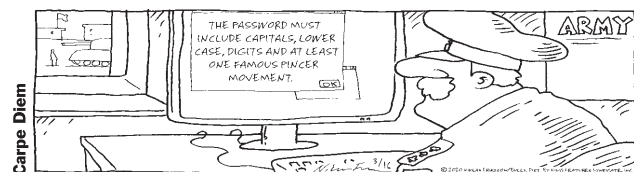
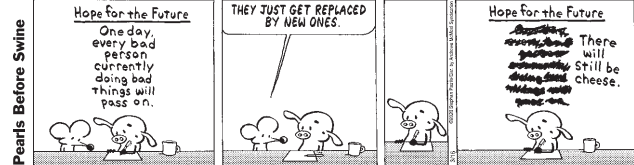
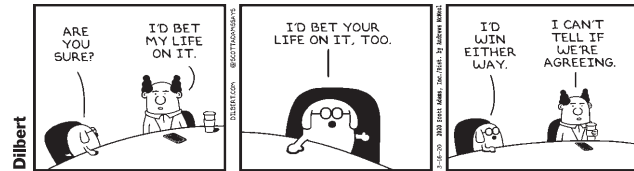
The festival was set to open with the world premiere of Judd Apatow's dramedy "The King of Staten Island," starring Pete Davidson. The film, expected to be released by Universal in June, was also scheduled to play at the upcoming Tribeca Film Festival in April, which has also been canceled.

SXSW is a qualifying festival for the Film Independent Spirit Awards and the Academy Awards short film categories, and the festival confirmed that status remains in place for this year's movies. All films selected for the festival may use the laurels of the festival on marketing materials.

Additionally, filmmakers may opt to have their films included in an online screening library being made available to press, buyers and the industry during the original dates of the festival, March 13-21.

There were more than 100 features, films and episodic projects scheduled to play at this year's film festival. The series of events that constitute the larger South By Southwest program including music, technology and more, last year was attended by more than 417,000 people in Austin, including 73,000 for the film festival.

As soon as the festival was canceled, many filmmakers were left trying to figure out where their films might now have their world premieres or how to get in front of buyers and press.



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3			4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11			12		13				14			
15					16				17			
18				19		20		21				
			22		23		24			25	26	27
28	29	30						32				
33					34		35		36			
37				38		39		40				
41					42		43					
			44			45		46		47	48	49
50	51	52			53		54		55			
56					57				58			
59					60					61		

ACROSS

- 1 "You've got mail" ISP
- 4 Chest muscle
- 7 Prejudice
- 11 Detail, briefly
- 13 Lawyers' org.
- 14 They give a hoot
- 15 — time (never)
- 16 Fish-fowl link
- 17 "I'm a klutz!"
- 18 Sacred song!
- 20 Cranny
- 22 Granola
- 24 Laundry holder
- 28 "No cause for alarm"
- 32 Sorta
- 33 "That's — ask"
- 34 Evening hrs.
- 36 Equipment
- 37 Trolley sound
- 39 Popular Rio beach
- 41 Snarl
- 43 Sashimi fish
- 44 Afrikaner
- 46 Ear bone
- 50 Cellist Ma
- 53 "Norma —"
- 55 Stadium event
- 56 Sandwich cookie
- 57 Medit. nation
- 58 Whirl
- 59 Calendar row
- 60 Clean air org.
- 61 Conclusion

DOWN

- 1 Now, in a memo
- 2 Makes a choice
- 3 Sultry Horne
- 4 Zero-star review
- 5 Black, in verse
- 6 Ersatz chocolate
- 7 Barnes & Noble events
- 8 — Jima
- 9 Jungfrau, e.g.
- 10 Snake's sound
- 12 It may be sold with a box of crayons
- 19 Chess piece
- 21 Sturdy tree
- 23 Spinning toy
- 25 Leg joint
- 26 Dutch cheese
- 27 O'Hara estate
- 28 Datum
- 29 Jazzy Fitzgerald
- 30 Arkin of "Argo"
- 31 Texter's "More than I need to know!"
- 35 Hot tub
- 38 Day- — paint
- 40 "Caught ya!"
- 42 Haunting
- 45 Grate
- 47 Smoke
- 48 an e-cig
- 48 Poker player's declaration
- 49 Give temporarily
- 50 "That hurts!"
- 51 Tramar contents
- 52 "— -haw!" (rodeo cry)
- 54 Geological period

Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	T	I	R	E	N	T	R	A	S	H
S	E	N	O	R	A		R	U	S	H
I	Q	T	E	S	T		I	N	H	A
D	U	O		T	A	R	P	S		D
E	L	E	N	O		L	E	O	M	O
E	L	E	N	A		C	D	T	O	W
			T	M	I		S	A	O	
I	D	P	H	O	T	O		C	L	A
M	E	R	E		A	R	C		A	G
A	L	I		A	L	G	A	E	E	D
M	E	D	I	C	I		P	T	B	O
S	T	E	R	N	A		O	R	A	L
E	S	S	E	N			N	E	R	S

CRYPTOQUIP

T D V W U B L R J L V U A U V D I I G
Q L R U C B L Q P N J K N Q H V L
Q H J I U V D P L U T D C L R N A
Q N K N P W G ' R Q N C : D
P N P N - V N J U L K .

Saturday's Cryptoquip: HOW FAST DOES NEGLECT TURN A PRETTY URBAN AREA INTO A RUN-DOWN EYESORE? THE SPEED OF BLIGHT.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals D

SCOREBOARD/GUAM/HIGH SCHOOL

Sports
on AFN

Go to the American Forces
Network website for the most
up-to-date TV schedules.
myafn.net

Pro basketball

NBA				
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Toronto	46	18	.719	—
x-Boston	43	21	.672	—
Philadelphia	39	26	.600	7½
Brooklyn	30	34	.469	16
New York	21	45	.318	26
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	41	24	.631	—
Orlando	30	35	.462	11
Washington	24	40	.375	16½
Charlotte	23	42	.354	18
Atlanta	20	47	.299	22
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Milwaukee	53	12	.815	—
Indiana	29	26	.600	14
Chicago	22	43	.338	31
Detroit	20	46	.303	33½
Cleveland	19	46	.292	34

WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	40	27	.597	11
Dallas	40	27	.597	11
Memphis	33	33	.492	8½
New Orleans	28	38	.429	12
San Antonio	27	36	.429	12½
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	43	22	.662	—
Utah	41	23	.641	—
Oklahoma City	24	40	.375	21
Portland	29	37	.438	24½
Minnesota	19	45	.297	29½
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-L.A. Lakers	41	24	.631	—
L.A. Clippers	40	24	.628	5½
Sacramento	28	36	.438	21½
Phoenix	25	39	.391	24
Golden State	15	50	.231	35

All games postponed at least until mid-April.

Pro hockey

NHL							
EASTERN CONFERENCE							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	70	44	14	12	100	227	174
Tampa Bay	70	39	21	10	89	245	195
Toronto	70	36	25	9	81	238	227
Florida	69	35	26	8	78	231	228
Montreal	71	31	31	9	71	212	221
Buffalo	69	30	31	8	68	195	217
Ottawa	71	25	34	12	62	191	243
Detroit	71	17	49	5	39	145	267
Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	69	41	20	8	89	240	215
Philadelphia	69	41	21	7	89	232	196
Pittsburgh	69	40	23	6	86	224	196
Carolina	68	38	25	5	81	222	193
Columbus	70	33	22	15	81	180	187
N.Y. Islanders	68	35	23	10	80	215	193
N.Y. Rangers	70	37	28	5	79	234	222
New Jersey	69	28	29	12	68	189	230

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss, two points for each division and two wild card points per conference advance to playoffs.
All games postponed at least until mid-April.

Pro football

XFL						
EASTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	Pct	PF	PA	
DC	3	2	.600	82	89	
St. Louis	3	2	.600	97	77	
New York	3	2	.600	79	85	
Tampa Bay	1	4	.200	98	115	
WESTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	Pct	PF	PA	
Houston	5	0	1.000	158	111	
Dallas	2	3	.400	90	102	
Los Angeles	2	3	.400	129	122	
Seattle	1	4	.200	87	119	
All games postponed at least until mid-April						

All games postponed at least until mid-April.

Deals

Saturday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
NATIONAL LEAGUE
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Assigned INF's Jacob Wilson, Brandon Snyder, C Tyler Gash, OF JB Schuck, RHP Dakota Bacus, RHP Bryan Bonnell and RHP Will Crave to minor league camp. Options INF Jake Noll, LHP Ben Braymer, RHP Aaron Crow, RHP Kyle McDonald, RHP Jesus PCCL. Announced the unconditional release of RHP David Hernandez, and RHP Hunter Strickland.

FOOTBALL
National Football League
ATLANTA FALCONS — Agreed to terms with RB Keith Smith on a three-year extension.
MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Terminated the contract of TE David Morgan.
DETROIT LIONS — Re-signed LS Don Muhlbach with undisclosed contract terms.
WASHINGTON REDSKINS — Placed franchise tag on OL Brandon Scherff.

COLLEGE
IONIA COLLEGE — Named Hall of Famer Rick Pitino as Men's Head Basketball Coach.

Pro baseball

Spring Training

AMERICAN LEAGUE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	12	6	.667	—
Oakland	13	8	.619	—
Texas	12	8	.600	—
New York	10	7	.588	—
Chicago	11	8	.579	—
Tampa Bay	9	9	.500	—
Kansas City	9	9	.500	—
Detroit	10	9	.474	—
Los Angeles	7	11	.389	—
Houston	7	11	.389	—
Baltimore	7	12	.368	—
Cleveland	7	12	.368	—
Seattle	6	12	.333	—

NATIONAL LEAGUE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	7	14	.333	—
Miami	12	6	.667	—
San Diego	8	8	.500	—
Los Angeles	10	7	.588	—
Baltimore	8	8	.500	—
Los Angeles	9	9	.500	—
San Francisco	8	9	.476	—
New York	8	9	.476	—
Cincinnati	8	9	.476	—
Atlanta	8	11	.421	—
Arizona	6	9	.400	—
Chicago	8	12	.400	—
Washington	6	11	.357	—
Pittsburgh	3	15	.167	—

All scheduled games canceled

Pro soccer

MLS						
EASTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Atlanta	2	0	0	6	4	2
Montreal	1	0	1	4	4	3
New York	1	0	1	4	4	3
Toronto FC	1	0	1	4	3	2
Columbus	1	0	1	4	2	1
D.C. United	1	1	0	3	2	3
Chicago	0	1	1	1	2	3
New England	0	1	1	1	2	3
Orlando City	0	1	1	1	1	2
Philadelphia	0	1	1	1	3	5
Cincinnati	0	2	0	0	3	5
Inter Miami CF	0	2	0	0	1	3
New York City FC	0	2	0	0	0	2

WESTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Sporting KC	2	0	0	6	7	1
Minnesota United	2	0	0	6	8	3
Colorado	2	0	0	6	4	2
FC Dallas	1	0	1	4	4	2
Los Angeles FC	1	0	1	4	4	3
Seattle	1	0	1	4	3	2
Portland	1	1	0	3	2	3
Vancouver	1	1	0	3	2	3
Real Salt Lake	0	0	2	2	1	1
LA Galaxy	0	0	1	1	1	2
San Jose	0	1	1	1	4	7
Houston	0	1	1	1	1	5
Nashville SC	0	2	0	0	1	3
Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.						
All games postponed at least until						

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

All games postponed at least until mid-April.

Golf

World rankings				
	1	2	3	4
J. Rory McIlroy	NIR	8.61		
D. Jon Rahm	ESP	9.42		
B. Brooks Koepka	USA	9.51		
A. Justin Thomas	USA	7.59		
R. Matt Thomas	USA	7.59		
G. Patrick Reed	USA	5.93		
A. Adam Scott	AUS	5.93		
N. Tiger Woods	ENG	5.66		
11. Bryson DeChambeau	USA	5.56		
12. Marc Leishman	ENG	5.04		
13. Justin Rose	ENG	5.04		
14. Matt Kuchar	USA	4.59		

Punches amid a pandemic
UFC holds full card in Brasilia in empty arena

Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil — The UFC staged a full fight card in an empty arena Saturday night in Brazil's capital city, sticking to its plan to keep fighting in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

Charles Oliveira stopped lightweight Kevin Lee with a guillotine choke in the third round of the main event in the UFC's first show since many other sports organizations around the world postponed and canceled competitions.

The world's biggest mixed martial arts promotion held 12 bouts in Brasilia with only the fighters, their camps, the television production crew and a few dozen essential personnel inside Nilson Nelson Gymnasium.

"It was a bit weird not having any fans inside the arena," said Bea Malecki, a Swedish bantamweight who won a decision over Veronica Macedo in the opening bout. "But I was able to hear everything my coaches were saying, and it was good. Sometimes it is so loud out there. It was a crazy week. We didn't know if the fight was going to happen or not, but we stuck to the plan. It was really emotional."

The UFC has not canceled any events in the wake of the pandemic, going against the plans of nearly all major sports leagues and organizations. UFC President Dana White has claimed the sports world is "panicking" with its cancellations, and he remains determined to stage four more shows over the next five weekends.

But White announced Saturday night that all four shows must take place at new, currently undetermined venues — including UFC 249, the promotion's next pay-per-view event headlined by lightweight champion Khabib Nurmagomedov fighting top contender Tony Ferguson.

"We're not stopping," White said on ESPN, the promotion's broadcast partner. "We will keep finding a way to put on the fights. I'm in the fight business. I've been doing this for over 20 years, and this stuff happens to me every weekend — obviously not at this level."

Guam private school league halts
all fourth-quarter season sports

Stars and Stripes

Just a day after the island crowned a high school basketball champion, Guam's private school league announced it was bringing preparations for the fourth-quarter season to a halt due to coronavirus concerns.

In a press release from league president Terry Debold, the Independent Interscholastic Athletic Association of Guam, in which Guam High School participates, announced it would "immediately" suspend any and all interscholastic sports activities" through Saturday.

The announcement was made in apparent response to reports Sunday that three individuals have tested positive for the coronavirus.

Fourth-quarter IIAAG sports include boys volleyball, track and field, girls soccer and paddling.

"While it is a disappointing action, the IIAAG's first and foremost priority is the safety and welfare of our members and those who share in interscholastic activities," Debold said in the

"We're not stopping. We will keep finding a way to put on the fights."

Dana White
UFC president

The UFC had scheduled a show with fans inside London's O2 Arena on March 21. The U.S. government's new travel restrictions regarding the United Kingdom have forced the UFC to move the show, White said.

The London show is likely to be held in the U.S., but Europe-based fighters are unlikely to be able to compete on the card. White's matchmakers are putting together a new undercard for the show, which is slated to be headlined by American welterweight Tyrone Woodley against Britain's Leon Edwards.

The UFC also intended to hold fan-free shows in Las Vegas on March 28 and April 11, but White said the Nevada State Athletic Commission's decision to suspend any combat sports competition in the state until March 25 have made it impossible to stick with that plan. He intends to find new homes for those shows, which were initially scheduled for Columbus, Ohio, and for Portland, Ore.

The UFC broadcast from Brasilia included constant promotion that the UFC 249 would be headlined by the bout between Nurmagomedov and Ferguson in a matchup that has been booked four previous times, but canceled each time due to injuries or other circumstances.

The show in Brasilia was likely a boon for ESPN, as it filled a yawning void of live sports during what's usually one of the busiest weeks of the international sporting calendar. The fights were initially scheduled to be aired in the U.S. on the ESPN+ subscription service, but instead filled nearly six hours on ESPN.

Panthers.

"With a season of so many ups and downs, I'm extremely proud of the way we competed," he said. "Second (isn't) so bad. Our players improved so much and I'm so thankful for having the opportunity to coach them."

The Panthers recovered from their slow start to reach the semifinals of the IIAAG playoffs, eventually losing to Harvest Christian in the third-place game.

Then, in an eight-team GBC playoff including Department of Education public-school teams, the Panthers upset Okkodo 80-71 in overtime in the quarterfinals, and avenged the loss to Harvest, winning 59-52 in the semifinals, before succumbing to the Friars in the final.

Dillen Dela Cruz led the Panthers with 12 points and Travon Jacobs pitched in with 10.

The Friars had also won the island's preseason tournament and the American School In Japan Kanto Classic in January, then the IIAAG and GBC tournaments this month.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

MAJOR POSTPONEMENTS

March Madness

Following a flurry of conferences and individual teams calling off their basketball seasons Thursday, the NCAA followed suit. They scrapped all college winter and spring championships, the highlight of which is the men's basketball tournament — a three-week extravaganza that stands as the biggest event this side of the Super Bowl on the U.S. sports calendar. The tournament had been held every year since 1939 for men's teams. There has been an annual women's tournament since 1982.

NBA

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said Thursday night that the league's hiatus because of the coronavirus pandemic will likely last at least a month, or roughly what would have been the remainder of an uninterrupted regular season. "What we determined today is that this hiatus will be, most likely, at least 30 days," Silver said on TNT's "Inside The NBA" while making his first public comments since the league suspended play Wednesday after Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert tested positive for the coronavirus. A second Jazz player, Donovan Mitchell, said Thursday that he has also tested positive. Silver did not say if the league intends the regular season to resume or if the NBA, should it return to action, would immediately go into postseason play. The 30-day minimum hiatus would mean no games until at least April 10.

Baseball

Major League Baseball scrapped spring training and postponed the start of its season, currently scheduled for March 26, for at least two weeks.

MLB had not had a mass postponement of openers since 1995, when the season was shortened from 162 games to 144 following a 7½-month players' strike that also wiped out the 1994 World Series.

The minor league season, which was to start April 9, also will be delayed along with qualifying in Arizona for this year's Olympic baseball tournament and for next year's World Baseball Classic.

Boxing

Top Rank has canceled two shows headlined by its elite young talent scheduled for New York this week. Former U.S. Olympian Shakur Stevenson was supposed to defend his featherweight title Saturday, and Ireland's Michael Conlan was to fight on St. Patrick's Day.



CHRIS MACHAN, OMAHA WORLD-HERALD/AP

With crowds limited to staff and immediate family due to coronavirus concerns, fans at the Class 1C boys high school basketball championship, in Lincoln, Neb., got creative with paper plate faces on seats.

Auto racing

NASCAR on Friday announced it would postpone its next two races, in Atlanta and Miami, after initially planning to hold the events without spectators.

IndyCar announced Friday that it would suspend its season through the end of April. The series also had planned to run this weekend in St. Petersburg, Fla., without fans in attendance before having a change of heart.

The first Formula One Grand Prix of the season, the Australian GP, was canceled. The Bahrain and Vietnam F1 races were postponed Friday. The Chinese Grand Prix in Shanghai, scheduled for April 19, was postponed on Feb. 12. The Formula One season could start in the Netherlands, at the Zandvoort track outside Amsterdam, on May 3.

Hockey

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said Thursday the league would "pause" its season, effective immediately, because of the pandemic, although the league did not report any positive tests for coronavirus. Bettman said the hope is to resume play later and still award the Stanley Cup.

Bettman on Friday urged players to self-isolate while the league is on hiatus.

The Stanley Cup has been awarded every year since 1893 with two exceptions: 1919, when the final was canceled after five games because of the Spanish flu outbreak, and 2005, when the season was called off because of a lockout.

A handful of European hockey leagues have called off the remainder of their seasons.

Golf

Augusta National on Friday postponed the Masters, with no indication as to when it might be played. The Masters has finished in April every year since 1935 — the first tournament was in late March — except when it was canceled from 1943 to 1945 because of World War II.

The PGA Tour decided Thursday to scrap the rest of The Players Championship and shut down its other tournaments for the next three weeks. There was no immediate word whether The Players Championship — the premier tournament run by the PGA Tour, offering a \$15 million purse — would be rescheduled.

The LPGA Tour postponed three tournaments, beginning next week, including its first major of the season.

Football

The XFL will be suspended for the rest of the 2020 season.

"The XFL is committed to playing a full season in 2021 and future years," the league said in a statement.

The NFL announced a number of changes and cancellations on its schedule of meetings, fan fest and scouting trips — all related to coronavirus.

Soccer

MLS is shutting down for 30 days and reportedly plans to reschedule postponed matches on the back end of the season.

The Premier League and the Champions League were suspended Friday, meaning all five of Europe's biggest national competitions are on hold. Matches in England will be stopped until at least April 3 after five Premier League clubs said some players or staff were in self-isolation.

The National Women's Soccer League is scheduled to begin the season April 18. The league canceled all preseason matches.

Horse racing

Races were going on in several states, although without fans in the stands; organizers of the Kentucky Derby were moving forward with plans for the May 2 race.

Tennis

The ATP called off men's tournaments for the next six weeks; the WTA said its tournament in South Carolina, set for April 6-12, would not be held as scheduled, with decisions about the rest of the season to come in the next week.

As of now, the next men's or women's tennis tournament still on the schedule is a WTA event on clay at Stuttgart, Germany, beginning April 20.

The next Grand Slam event, the French Open, is still scheduled to be held in Paris beginning May 24.

Olympics

The IOC on Thursday went ahead with its ceremonial lighting of the Olympic flame. On Friday, though, the Greek Olympic committee suspended the rest of its torch relay because of the "unexpectedly large crowd" that gathered to watch. Also on Friday, President Donald Trump's suggestion to postpone the Tokyo Games for a year because of the spreading coronavirus was immediately shot down by Japan's Olympic minister.

Information from wire reports



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COLLEGE BASKETBALL/NFL

Iona hires Pitino

Hall of Famer was out of coaching in college since Louisville scandal

Associated Press

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — Hall of Famer Rick Pitino was named basketball coach at Iona College on Saturday.

Pitino coached at Louisville from 2001-17 before being fired in a pay-for-play scandal and had been coaching in Greece. He replaces Tim Cluess, who resigned Friday due to health concerns after 10 years and six NCAA Tournament appearances.

"My passion in basketball started in New York and will end there at Iona College," Pitino said in a statement released by the Catholic school located north of New York City in suburban Westchester County that has an undergraduate enrollment of 3,300 students.

The 67-year-old Pitino has a 770-271 overall record in college and became the first coach to take three different schools to the Final Four. He won national championships at Louisville (2013) and Kentucky (1996) and also went to the Final Four with Providence in 1987.

Pitino coached twice in the NBA, with the New York Knicks (1987-89) and the Boston Celtics (1997-2001), where he was also team president.

Last June, Pitino coached Panathinaikos to the championship in the Greek League.

Iona President Seamus Carey said "after a thorough interview process, we are confident that Rick's experience and commitment to Iona and our community make him the right person to continue to build on Tim Cluess' success."

Pitino's return to college basketball comes nearly six months after he and Louisville settled lawsuits stemming from his departure in the wake of a federal investigation of corruption in college basketball.

The coach had sued the University of Louisville Athletic

By the numbers

.739

Rick Pitino's college basketball career winning percentage, including stops at Hawaii, Boston University, Providence, Kentucky and Louisville.

3

Pitino is the only coach to take three teams (Providence, Louisville and Kentucky) to the Final Four, winning the title twice.

SOURCE: Associated Press

Association for more than \$38.7 million in November 2017, alleging it breached its contract by firing him for cause. The school had countersued and sought monetary damages for vacated games and bonuses. Pitino received no money in the settlement, with his personnel file changing from termination to a resignation effective 13 days before he was fired.

The settlement closed a bitter final chapter between the school and Pitino, who wasn't named in the federal complaint. He repeatedly said he knew nothing about payments made to the family of a recruit to sign with Louisville.

The school's acknowledgement of its involvement in the federal investigation occurred as it appealed NCAA sanctions that cost Louisville its 2013 national championship.



SETH WENIG/AP

Former Louisville basketball coach Rick Pitino was named basketball coach at Iona College on Saturday. Pitino coached at Louisville from 2001-17 before being fired in a pay-for-play scandal and had been coaching in Greece. He replaces Tim Cluess, who resigned Friday.



RON SCHWANE/AP

Tom Brady is the most prominent player scheduled to become a free agent starting Wednesday.

Free agency still on for now

By SAM FARMER
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Down, set . wait?

A lot of people around the NFL are expecting the league to push back this week's scheduled start of free agency in light of the coronavirus outbreak, following the lead of virtually every other sports league. The belief: The league will temporarily pause the ticking countdown clock.

For now, though, it's business as usual. The focus still Saturday night was on the pressing matter of players voting on a new collective bargaining agreement. The widespread belief is the league was waiting to address a potential free-agency delay until after the Saturday night CBA voting deadline passed. Players have approved a new labor agreement, so now the focus can shift to the business of free agency and trades.

As it stands, the legal tampering period — when teams and players can talk about potential deals — starts at 9 a.m. Pacific time Monday, followed by the official start of free agency at 1 p.m. Wednesday.

The possible delay isn't the only reason this year is different. The most successful quarterback in league history could be on the open market. New England's Tom Brady, winner of six Super Bowl rings, is scheduled to become a free agent and could have a long line of suitors in addition to the Patriots, likely among them the Los Angeles Chargers, Las Vegas Raiders and Tennessee Titans. Possibly the San Francisco 49ers and others to boot.

But it's not all about Brady. Some lesser-known players are in line to get big paydays too, such as cornerback Byron Jones (currently with Dallas), guard Joe Thuney (New England) and defensive tackle Javon Hargrave (Pittsburgh).

Whereas some teams have an enormous amount of salary-cap space — Miami, Indianapolis, Buffalo, Tampa Bay and the New

York Giants all have at least \$78 million to work with — others are close to bumping their heads on the \$200-million salary ceiling. San Francisco, Kansas City, Jacksonville, New Orleans, Atlanta and Pittsburgh all have less than \$15 million in wiggle room.

Some of the big-name free agents won't be going anywhere. New Orleans, for instance, is expected to work out a new deal with quarterback Drew Brees before free agency begins, and Kansas City is expected to apply the franchise designation to defensive tackle Chris Jones.

Denver has franchised safety Justin Simmons, and Jacksonville has done the same with pass rusher Yannick Ngakoue.

There will be elite pass rushers to be had, however. Seattle's

Jadeveon Clowney, a former No. 1 overall pick, figures to hit the open market, and the Los Angeles Rams will have to work some salary-cap magic to keep linebacker Cory Littleton and outside linebacker Dante Fowler.

There's a possibility the Patriots could lose coveted safety Devin McCourty.

But again, this could all happen on a delayed schedule. The NFL on Friday banned all in-person visits with draft-eligible players. If they want to communicate with prospects, teams must now do so by phone or video conference.

Then, there's the adjustment to the financial realities of a new CBA. So far now, though teams are positioned to make moves, teams will wait if they must.

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NFL/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Players approve labor deal

By BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

NFL players have approved a new labor agreement with the league that features a 17-game regular season, higher salaries, increased roster sizes and larger pensions for current and former players.

The deal, which runs through the 2030 season, was accepted by the 32 team owners last month. The NFL Players Association's membership spent the past week voting on the 439-page document after its executive board narrowly rejected it by a 6-5 vote, and the player representatives voted 17-14 in favor, with one abstention.

Clearly, there was some strong player opposition to this collective bargaining agreement, though. Many stars, including Aaron Rodgers, Russell Wilson, J.J. Watt and Todd Gurley, spoke out against it. The total vote, among the nearly 2,500 union members who participated, was 1,019-959.

Ratification required a simple majority, and results were announced Sunday.

"We are pleased that the players have voted to ratify the proposed new CBA, which will provide substantial benefits to all current and retired players, increase jobs, ensure continued progress on player safety, and give our fans more and better football," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement.

The 2020 NFL business season begins Wednesday with free agency and trades — though a delay is possible given league restrictions on travel as a safeguard against the new coronavirus. A 17-game schedule won't happen before the 2021 season. The mechanics for an uneven number of games — neutral sites or which teams get nine home games — will be worked out in the interim.

Extending the season was a nonissue with the players in 2011. But the gains they make in the new agreement in sharing "a bigger portion of the growing pie," according to outgoing NFLPA President Eric Winston, swayed the vote this time.



AARON DOSTER/AP

Workers remove chairs from media row inside the University of Dayton Arena on Friday, in Dayton, Ohio. The 29-2 Flyers were rolling into tourney play on a 20-game winning streak that had lifted spirits in an Ohio city battered in the past year by violent deaths and devastation.

Virus dashes Dayton's dream season

No. 3 Flyers had hoped for first Final Four appearance in 53 years

By DAN SEWELL
Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — The coronavirus outbreak has abruptly roused the University of Dayton's men's basketball team, and the city it uplifted, from a dream of a season.

The 29-2 Flyers, ranked No. 3 in The Associated Press poll, were rolling into tournament play on a 20-game winning streak that had lifted spirits in a city battered in the past year by a mass shooting and devastating tornadoes.

But the NCAA's decision Thursday to cancel March Madness, one of many such cancellations decided this week as the virus spread, ended hopes for the small Roman Catholic school's first Final Four appearance since 1967, when an upstart Flyers team lost to Lew Alcindor-led UCLA in the championship game.

Flyers fans shook their heads Friday in the Oregon entertainment district, where the shooting occurred on 4.

"I feel like they got robbed," said Shawn Matthews, 21, who said he is a cousin of guard Trey Landers.

His father, Norman Matthews, 49, said they had been "looking forward to them going all the way. Wow."

Cancelling, though, was the right decision,

with the virus spreading, he said.

"You don't know what to expect," the older Matthews said. "I guess we have to wait till next year."

Landers, a Dayton native, lamented on Twitter: "I wish that all of this was just a dream I could wake up from. ... wish I could play one more game with my brothers." He added a broken-heart emoji.

"To see it end like this makes my heart hurt, but I am so grateful to get the opportunity to play at UD," another team leader, Ryan Mikesell, posted on Instagram. "It was an honor to wear 'Dayton' across my chest, and it allowed me to create memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life."

Coach Anthony Grant, who also played at Dayton, taped a thank-you message for "Flyer nation" Thursday night after returning to campus from the Atlantic 10 conference tournament in New York City without playing a game.

"Although we feel like there was more for us to try to accomplish over the course of the season, there's nothing that can take away what these young men did out on the court throughout the entire season," Grant said. "History was made in a lot of different areas. The effort, the love that they showed for each other I think represents this university, this community, in an unbelievable fashion."

Landers and Mikesell are seniors, and slam-dunk sensation Obi Toppin is likely NBA-bound, leaving Grant with big holes to fill and Dayton likely to begin next season as it did this one: unranked.

Mayor Nan Whaley, a UD alum, said Friday it's stunning that the Flyers' season was ended "not by a loss, but by an international crisis."

Dayton's athletic director and basketball head coaches on Friday offered thoughts and prayers to virus victims, along with hopes that the cancellations will help slow its spread.

"This is bigger than basketball," Grant said.

Both teams won their conferences, and the coaches said it was tough to see them lose what could be a once-in-a-lifetime chance for a national title.

"They were heartbroken," women's Coach Shauna Green said. "It broke my heart."

The NCAA cancellation is also a setback for a struggling economy that annually hosts the tournament's First Four opening games.

"We're all going to take a hit," said Gus Stathes, 35, who runs Barrel House bar with his wife.

The team, he said, had been "a sun ray bursting down from the storm" for Dayton.

Now that ray is gone.

"It's a very Dayton scenario," Stathes grumbled.

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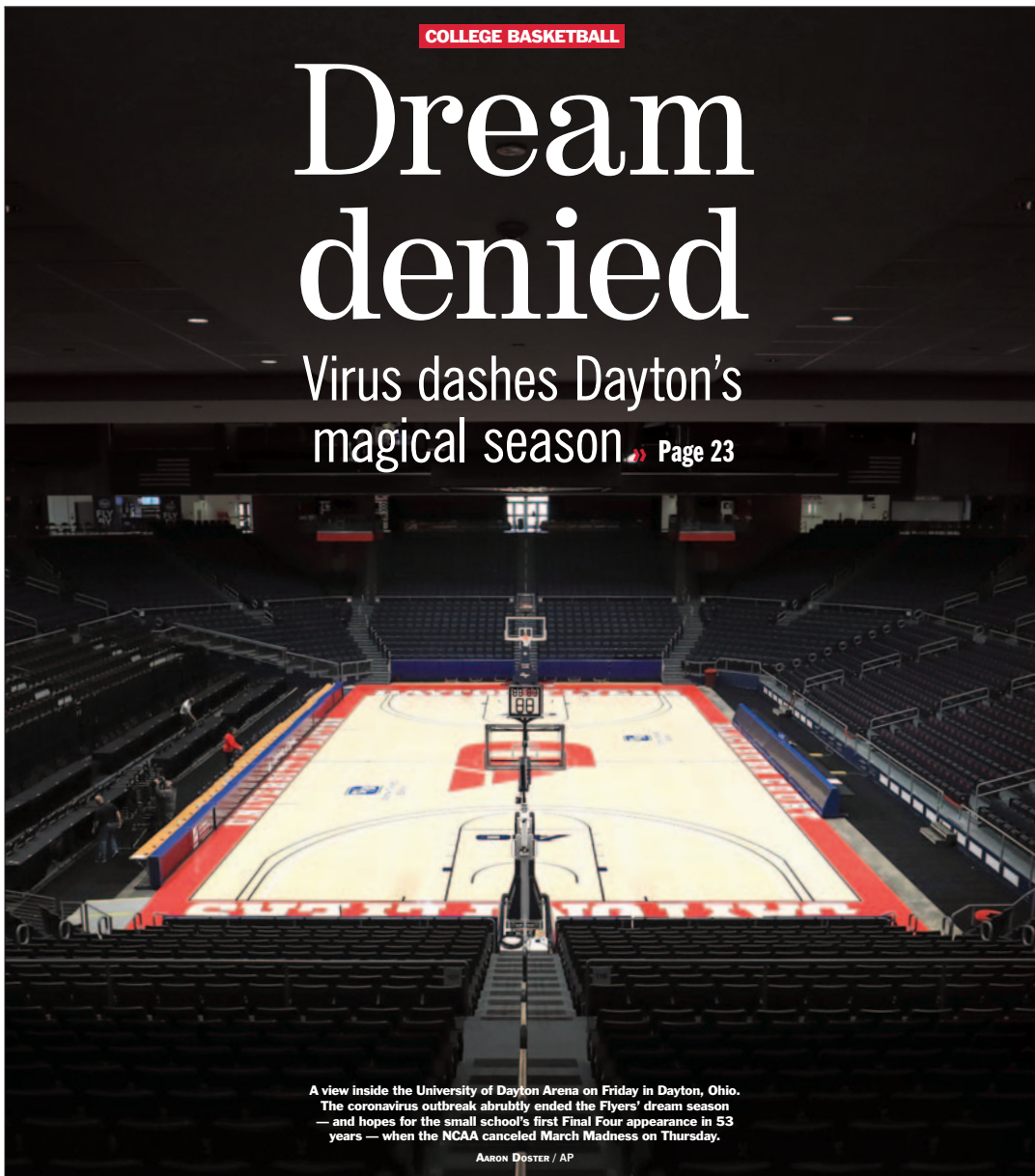


Fighting without fans
Full card held in empty arena
MMA, Page 19

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Dream denied

Virus dashes Dayton's
magical season **Page 23**



A view inside the University of Dayton Arena on Friday in Dayton, Ohio. The coronavirus outbreak abruptly ended the Flyers' dream season — and hopes for the small school's first Final Four appearance in 53 years — when the NCAA canceled March Madness on Thursday.

AARON DOSTER / AP

TO OUR READERS

As the sports world pauses to join the rest of the world in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, you will see fewer sports stories in Stars and Stripes. We look forward to resuming our normal coverage when the leagues and governing bodies determine it is safe for athletes and fans to return to competition.

